

RELATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES FROM **HEBREWS-REVELATION**

God For Us

SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDIES

CREATED BY STEVE CASE

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God For Us is a set of Relational Bible Studies from the New Testament books of Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, and Revelation—one chapter at a time.

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Dedicated to all who have participated in
Relational Bible Studies guided by the Holy Spirit

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Relational Bible Studies: What Are They?

A Relational Bible Study is a small group Bible study that depends on the active presence of the Holy Spirit when the group reads Scripture and utilizes “Scripture prompts” as a tool to receive God’s messages for them to live today.

Some people avoid Bible study because they don’t feel equipped to do it or because their previous experience didn’t seem worthwhile. At times it seems the person leading the Bible study makes all the difference. But Bible study leaders sometimes say the participants, depending on their attitudes and readiness, make the difference.

Relational Bible Studies rely on the Holy Spirit being present and active in bringing the Bible to life with personal understanding and applications. Everyone becomes a participant even if someone in the group may function as a facilitator. Those wiser, older, better educated, and more experienced have no advantage over others. Is that a relief or a threat to you?

The book of Hebrews (1:1-4; 9:11-15) explains how Jesus is superior to everything God had given to the Hebrew people prior to Christ’s appearance on earth. He remains superior. And while he speaks on our behalf in heaven, Jesus also speaks to us now on earth through the Holy Spirit. According to the book of Revelation (5:6), when Jesus returned to heaven he sent the Holy Spirit throughout the earth. Pray for the Holy Spirit’s presence, power, and proclamation to you through Scripture and the Spirit’s impressions as you tune your head and heart and hands to him.

These studies take one chapter of Scripture at a time. Submitting ourselves to the active Holy Spirit, participants take turns reading one chapter aloud and then respond to a variety of Scripture prompts with more than one answer. Instead of pinpointing a single “right” answer, this method takes Scripture as the starting point for God to continue to speak to us.

God’s Word remains true, and the Holy Spirit continues to conform us to God’s will and ways. No wonder the messages of 1 John speak to churches generation after generation. It shouldn’t surprise us that the messages to the seven churches in Revelation have spoken to many other churches ever since God sent John those messages. They had special meaning in past generations, and they give fresh meaning to us today in our specific setting.

This set of Bible studies includes the lively and highly symbolic Book of Revelation. For those interested in another way of studying the Book of Revelation, go online to Revelation101.com for materials that focus on “Finding Jesus in the Book of Revelation.”

The materials in this book have been created, field-tested with different groups, revised, and put online as a free download available at RelationalBibleStudies.org (A special “Thank you” to people who have donated to Involve Youth for this to be available). Some people prefer a hard copy, so that led to the publication you have in your hands now.

How To Do A Relational Bible Study

While individuals can do these on their own, Relational Bible Studies were originally designed for a small group to interact with the Holy Spirit and each other through reading the Bible, being sensitive to promptings from the Holy Spirit, and sharing those promptings with the group for their engagement as well. We recommend seven steps for this process.

7 Steps

1. Invite the Holy Spirit to guide the group study.

This completely depends on the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, it's just a chat session, a friendly gathering, or an instructional seminar. Relational Bible Studies are *not* dependent on a skilled leader or Bible scholar or super saint. The Holy Spirit can speak through anyone in the group.

2. Use an opening question that will “level the playing field.”

An opening question introduces the topic, but more importantly, the question doesn't make one person in the group more of an expert than anyone else—no totem pole positioning. For example, instead of asking, “How often do you read the Bible?” ask, “Would you prefer to read the Bible at the start or the end of the day?”

3. Read the passage of Scripture.

Read this aloud. Go around the circle and read a paragraph or so—a few verses. Take turns until you have finished the passage. The Holy Spirit is the crucial presence that connects you and your small group to God through the Bible—God's Word. The same Holy Spirit that inspired Bible writers years ago is essential to inspire your reading now.

4. Take some time to answer the Bible prompts individually.

After reading the Bible passage, spend some time reflecting by using the Scripture prompts. Mark your responses individually. You might choose more than one answer. After individual reflection (5-10 minutes), you're ready for small group discussion since you've thought about it some and listened for impressions from the Holy Spirit.

5. Discuss some of the questions with the group.

You can begin with the first question or any of the others. Ask for people to give their responses. The questions are geared for more than one possible response rather than a yes/no or true/false quiz. The questions move from the passage of Scripture toward personal application. Take turns. After one person gives input, invite others to give theirs as well. When discussion ceases, move to another Scripture prompt.

6. Identify what the Holy Spirit's message is for you right now.

Be sensitive to what God is communicating to you throughout this experience. It might have come during the opening prayer, the reading of Scripture, your individual responses to the prompts, or during the discussion. What is the Holy Spirit's message to you right now, and how can you live it out this week? Apply this to yourself rather than telling others what they should do. Share with the group what the Holy Spirit's message is for you. This might be different for each person in the group.

7. Close with a time of prayer.

Pray for one another in the group, asking for the Holy Spirit to continue with each person as they seek to live out this week the message they received. Add whatever other prayer messages you'd like. Go around the circle or use conversational prayer. Encourage participants to continue in silent prayer when there are moments in which no one is praying out loud. Close with a hearty, “Amen.”

Notes

THE BOOK OF _____

Hebrews

The Revelation of God

OPENING QUESTION

Who are you most like? Who is most like you?

READ Hebrews 1:1–14.

1. Rank (1-10) how effectively God has spoken in the past in these ways?

- A. ___ Creation.
- B. ___ Prophets.
- C. ___ Angels (the word means “messengers”).
- D. ___ Priests.
- E. ___ Audible voice, like on Mount Sinai.
- F. ___ Sanctuary services.
- G. ___ Sabbath and Sabbaths (7th day + annual feasts/festivals).
- H. ___ Torah (the 10 commandments or the first five books or the entire Old Testament)
- I. ___ Covenants and symbols of those covenants.
- J. ___ Other.

2. What amazes you the MOST about Jesus?

- A. God created the universe through Jesus.
- B. God communicated what he is like through Jesus.
- C. Jesus sits at the right hand of God in heaven.
- D. Jesus gives a total reflection of God.
- E. That Jesus came to earth.
- F. That Jesus died for us and because of us.
- G. That so many people believe Jesus is God.
- H. Christ’s love for me.
- I. Other.

3. What does the “Father-Son” metaphor tell us about God and Jesus?

- A. There’s a mother some place.
- B. God is older than Jesus.
- C. They are so much alike, and yet different.
- D. Jesus is inferior to God.
- E. God will one day be replaced by Jesus.
- F. It seems more like Greek mythology than Hebrew thought.
- G. Jesus might have some other siblings.
- H. They are like twins.
- I. Other.

4. What makes Jesus better than angels?

- A. Jesus is God.
- B. Angels worship Jesus.
- C. Jesus created the angels.
- D. Jesus created the universe and outlives it.
- E. Look at the seating chart in heaven.
- F. Jesus isn't better than angels since he became a human on earth.
- G. Angels carry out the requests and orders Jesus gives.
- H. Other.

5. What did Jesus reveal about God that wasn't already known?

- A. Love.
- B. Acceptance.
- C. Some of the religious rules really aren't religious.
- D. How personable God can be.
- E. Submission.
- F. God's interest in the whole world, not just the Hebrews.
- G. Favorite color and favorite food.
- H. A sense of humor.
- I. Other.

6. Why would Hebrew people have a problem with Jesus?

- A. Jesus didn't set up an earthly kingdom.
- B. Jesus didn't go through the Jewish school system.
- C. He wasn't normal in some ways; and was too normal in other ways.
- D. His avoidance of political power.
- E. Poor pedigree.
- F. His acceptance of unacceptable people.
- G. Jesus upset the entire religious system and leaders.
- H. Look at the kinds of people who followed him.
- I. Other.

7. In what ways has God spoken since Jesus was here 2,000 years ago?

8. What Scripture would you use to highlight the significance of Jesus?

Superman

OPENING QUESTION

Who is your favorite action hero? Why?

READ **Hebrews 2:1–18.**

1. What causes you to drift from the good news of salvation?

- A. I've heard it all my life.
- B. I haven't drifted from it.
- C. I don't even notice that I'm drifting.
- D. It doesn't affect me the way it used to.
- E. So often minor stuff becomes the major stuff.
- F. I'm too busy to give it the attention it demands.
- G. Religious people have disappointed or hurt me.
- H. Other.

2. How does Jesus compare to angels?

- A. Better—of course!
- B. For a time, Jesus was lower on the totem pole than angels.
- C. Jesus functions like an angel.
- D. Both are invisible.
- E. Jesus is busier than any angel.
- F. Jesus died; angels don't die.
- G. Jesus created the angels.
- H. Jesus is higher up the chain now, but not as high as he used to be.
- I. Other.

3. How do you relate to death?

- A. I try not to think about it much.
- B. I think about it too much.
- C. Jesus died so I don't have to die.
- D. It's certainly one of my fears.
- E. Not a big deal—it happens to everyone.
- F. As long as it comes late in life, it's okay.
- G. It tears me up.
- H. I fight it as much as I can.
- I. Other.

4. Jesus tasted death for everyone (vs. 9). This means:

- A. Nobody on earth has to die.
- B. Nobody on earth will die.
- C. Nobody on earth will die “the second death.”
- D. I have no idea.
- E. Jesus paid the penalty for everyone.
- F. Jesus experienced total separation from God.
- G. Jesus accepted on himself the total accumulation of human sin.
- H. Other.

5. What role does Jesus play as our “faithful high priest” before God?

- A. Jesus pleads for mercy from God on our behalf.
- B. God demonstrated mercy; no need for Jesus to convince him.
- C. Jesus lets God know what it’s like to be human.
- D. Without being in heaven ourselves, we have representation.
- E. Jesus deals with lots of prayers from earth.
- F. We can count on Jesus to take care of our sins.
- G. Jesus connects God in heaven to us on earth.
- H. Other.

6. How was Jesus like you? How was Jesus not like you?

LIKE YOU

NOT LIKE YOU

- | | | |
|-------|-------|------------------------------------|
| _____ | _____ | God. |
| _____ | _____ | Human. |
| _____ | _____ | Lived on earth. |
| _____ | _____ | Lives in heavenly places. |
| _____ | _____ | Naturally selfish. |
| _____ | _____ | Overcame lots of adversity. |
| _____ | _____ | Access to heavenly beings. |
| _____ | _____ | Talked with God a lot. |
| _____ | _____ | Experienced temptation repeatedly. |
| _____ | _____ | Performed miracles. |
| _____ | _____ | Other. |

7. What’s a truth you’ve heard and won’t forget? What’s one truth you tend to forget?

8. What does Jesus do as your high priest? What difference does that make?

To Be(lieve) or Not To Be(lieve)

OPENING QUESTION

As a child, what's an experience that influenced you either to trust/believe or not to trust/believe?

READ Hebrews 3:1–18.

1. How do you fix your thoughts on Jesus (vs. 1)?

- A. Hang a picture of Jesus on a wall in my house or on the fridge.
- B. Be sure I have daily devotions.
- C. I really don't.
- D. Listen to Christian music.
- E. Look for God's actions in my world every day.
- F. Pray without ceasing.
- G. Get a brain transplant.
- H. Other.

2. Why do people rebel against God (vs. 8, 15)?

- A. It's just natural.
- B. People think they have a better idea than God.
- C. It's part of a maturing process.
- D. Because they are demon-possessed.
- E. To see whether or not God is serious about what he says.
- F. God is testing them.
- G. They lack God's perspective.
- H. God sets the bar too high.
- I. Other.

3. In what way are we "God's house" (vs. 6)?

- A. God created us.
- B. The Holy Spirit lives in us when we accept Jesus "into our hearts."
- C. Jesus is the foundation, but we're the structure.
- D. We're a remodeling project.
- E. It's a big, big house.
- F. People feel at home with God when they are with us.
- G. Each room seems to be different.
- H. The wonderful things in our life are what God is doing.
- I. Other.

4. How do you encourage others daily (vs. 13)?

- A. I purposely affirm people on a regular basis.
- B. I'm not that kind of person.
- C. I look for the best in others and then say something about it.
- D. I have some great friends so it's not that hard.
- E. Putting it on my daily checklist helps.
- F. By reflecting on my own blessings, I'm able to encourage others.
- G. I listen a lot.
- H. Random acts of kindness.
- I. Other.

5. What would cause you to have an "unbelieving heart" (vs.12)?

- A. Lack of evidence.
- B. Growing up in an unbelieving environment.
- C. Science and the scientific method.
- D. Not able to feel or sense God.
- E. A bad experience.
- F. Questions—I'm skeptical.
- G. When I pray and nothing seems to happen.
- H. Other.

6. How do you continue to hold a conviction firmly to the very end (vs. 14)?

- A. I'm stubborn.
- B. Make the conviction a strong one at the start.
- C. Re-live the conviction periodically.
- D. Practice spiritual disciplines on a regular basis.
- E. Eliminate anything that would question my conviction.
- F. Make additional commitments that reinforce the original one.
- G. Hang out only with people who share my convictions.
- H. Act on the conviction so it becomes my identity.
- I. Other.

7. When and where do you hear God's voice (vs. 7)?

8. What tilts the scales for you either toward belief or toward unbelief?