

1 Corinthians  
Colossians  
2 Timothy  
Philemon  
Ephesians  
Galatians  
1 Thessalonians  
Romans  
Philippians  
Ephesians  
Philemon

RELATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES FROM **ROMANS-PHILEMON**

# God In Us

**SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDIES**

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**CREATED BY STEVE CASE**

Colossians  
Galatians  
2 Thessalonians  
Galatians  
Romans  
2 Timothy  
Ephesians  
Philippians  
Titus

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**God In Us** is a set of Relational Bible Studies from the New Testament books of Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon—one chapter at a time.

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***Dedicated to all who have participated*** in  
Relational Bible Studies over the years

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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.

Frequently Bible studies have a predetermined topic with a collection of key texts that relate to that topic. Drawing on different parts of Scripture adds breadth and authority for those who believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God. The best texts get presented first. The more texts in a study, the more “Biblical” it appears to be. But who decides which texts to use? What about other texts that aren’t used? Are some of the texts taken out of context to prove the desired results for the topic?

Another Bible study method takes just one passage of Scripture, taking a deep dive into what the verses say, what it means in context, and what historical or cultural background might help us better understand it today. Key words receive special attention and other verses of Scripture might be used to compare with the main passage. Some people prefer this method and most pastors are trained to be able to do this.

Both the person leading the Bible study and those participating impact the Bible study. The leader’s Bible knowledge and understanding help to shape how others come to understand the verses utilized. Participants might be eager to learn, argumentative, compliant, or just go through the motions.

Relational Bible Studies are different. They depend on the Holy Spirit to be present and active as the participants read a passage of Scripture. The focus continues to be God’s message(s) for each person in the group. The Holy Spirit who inspired the Bible writers years ago must be present for us to receive the message the same Holy Spirit has for us today. Instead of a leader and participants, the group has a facilitator and everyone becomes a participant—with the Holy Spirit and with each other.

Following a prayer that invites the Holy Spirit’s presence and action, the group reads the passage of Scripture, usually a chapter, and then responds to Scripture prompts. Instead of looking for one “right answer” the process remains focused on what the Holy Spirit is bringing to your attention from Scripture. It might differ from one person to another, and individuals might have more than one response for any given question. The option “other” keeps the door open for additional input from God.

Those who prefer a directive structure with a predictable conclusion might find RBS too fluid and uncertain. Those unaccustomed to listening for messages or promptings from the Holy Spirit might avoid such an obvious reliance on God during a Bible study. But those who desire an experience with God are likely to find new life and challenges with Relational Bible Studies. As a group experiments with this over several studies, their perceptions from God could sharpen and their interactions as a group could deepen. Instead of only information, participants can have a more holistic encounter with God and seek God’s power to live out the Bible messages through their lives.

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](http://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

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THE BOOK OF \_\_\_\_\_

# Romans

# Gospel

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## OPENING QUESTION

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How would you introduce yourself to someone you wanted to impress?

## READ Romans 1:1–32.

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### 1. What is the “Gospel” (literally translated: “Good News”)?

- A. Jesus died for my sins.
- B. Jesus died for the sins of the whole world.
- C. Jesus rules the universe.
- D. You can become better than you are.
- E. Jesus is returning to earth a second time.
- F. You reap what you sow.
- G. God loves you.
- H. God is full of both mercy and justice.
- I. Other.

### 2. What has been the Gospel at different times in your life?

- A. Forgiveness.
- B. Power.
- C. Hope.
- D. Mercy.
- E. Grace.
- F. A friend.
- G. The Holy Spirit.
- H. A new perspective.
- I. Other.

### 3. What is the Gospel for Jews compared to the Gospel for Gentiles?

- A. It's the same.
- B. Jews have received more revelations than Gentiles.
- C. Messiah for Jews; Supreme Being for Gentiles.
- D. It has to come to people in their own context.
- E. Jesus.
- F. I have no idea what you're talking about.
- G. God's promises fulfilled.
- H. Both require faith
- I. Other.

**4. To whom are you most effective in sharing the Gospel?**

- A. People who are a lot like me.
- B. People who are different from me.
- C. Those who have grown up as Christians.
- D. People who have little or no interest in God.
- E. People who are down and out.
- F. Powerful people.
- G. I don't share the Gospel.
- H. I live it rather than talk about it.
- I. Other.

**5. Why do people reject the revelation of God in creation?**

- A. They just don't see it.
- B. Nature reveals evolution and natural selection; not God.
- C. They don't want to worship something invisible to them.
- D. It's easier to worship a golden calf.
- E. Lack of gratitude.
- F. Submission is not something they will do.
- G. Our sense of achievement or entitlement—this earth is mine.
- H. Other.

**6. Why does God abandon people to their evil ways?**

- A. God honors our freedom of choice.
- B. Sometimes it's best to wait until people are ready to change.
- C. God would rather have us cold than lukewarm.
- D. That's the best way for them to come to their senses.
- E. If he didn't give them a break, he might just destroy them.
- F. It's God's form of "tough love."
- G. Equal treatment—you abandon me and I'll abandon you.
- H. Other.

**7. What is your paraphrase of *Romans 1:16-17*?**

**8. Where do you see people brazenly going against God and even encouraging others to do likewise?**

# The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

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## OPENING QUESTION

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Describe a time you got punished more than someone who really deserved it.

### READ Read Romans 2:1—29.

---

#### 1. Who is worse than you?

- A. Most of the people in the world.
- B. I'm about average.
- C. It depends on which part of my life.
- D. People in the spotlight.
- E. Convicted criminals.
- F. Religious people.
- G. People without God.
- H. Stupid people.
- I. Other.

#### 2. Will there really ever be a Day of Judgment?

- A. I think so.
- B. I hope so.
- C. I hope not.
- D. There already has been.
- E. Nobody really knows until it happens.
- F. Having it in mind influences what I do or don't do.
- G. I don't think judging is a good thing.
- H. If there is, God will have a lot of explaining to do.
- I. Other.

#### 3. If there is a Day of Judgment, when will it be?

- A. It happened at the cross.
- B. At Christ's Second Coming.
- C. At Christ's Third Coming.
- D. Right after a person dies.
- E. Whenever a person stands trial.
- F. When we least expect it.
- G. A long time from now.
- H. Soon.
- I. Other.

**4. If God doesn't show favorites (verse 11), why do some people seem to have it better and others seem to have it worse?**

- A. It's not really up to God.
- B. It's due to the choices we make.
- C. It's because of the cards we're dealt from birth.
- D. God judges people based on what they've been given.
- E. A lot of this has to do with luck.
- F. It depends on a person's attitude.
- G. It depends on when and where you live.
- H. That's what I want to ask God.
- I. Other.

**5. How is your conscience?**

- A. What conscience?
- B. It's very sensitive.
- C. I don't always listen to it.
- D. I'm trying to correct it.
- E. I don't know when to trust it and when not to trust it.
- F. It's okay.
- G. What difference does it make?
- H. Other.

**6. Why do followers of God so often get a bad name?**

- A. They're a bunch of hypocrites.
- B. They're weird.
- C. Those calling them names are lashing out from a guilty conscience.
- D. Their values and actions make no sense to someone without God.
- E. They have a bad history.
- F. They're just misunderstood.
- G. They focus on little things and miss the bigger things.
- H. Other.

**7. Would you rather have God's revelations (like the Bible) or would you rather be ignorant of them?**

**8. Are you a better follower of God on the inside or on the outside?**



# Right with God

---

## OPENING QUESTION

---

What is your earliest memory of church?

## READ Romans 3:1–31.

---

### 1. What are the advantages of growing up as a follower of God?

- A. God loves you more.
- B. You have access to Scripture from your earliest memories.
- C. The culture of God is your natural bent from the beginning.
- D. I can't think of any advantages.
- E. You're less likely to participate in self-destructive behaviors.
- F. You have more to offer others.
- G. You belong to a community of faith.
- H. You have a greater chance of choosing God for yourself.
- I. Other.

### 2. What are the disadvantages of growing up as a follower of God?

- A. God doesn't seem so special.
- B. You're more likely to suffer from guilt and phoniness.
- C. You do things out of habit rather than from the mind or the heart.
- D. I can't think of any disadvantages.
- E. Living in a bubble that separates you from the world.
- F. You don't get as many opportunities to try out the "pleasures of sin."
- G. The tendency to think you're better than others.
- H. You probably don't have an obvious "Damascus Road" conversion.
- I. Other.

### 3. What are some of the ways people twist God's forgiveness?

- A. They try to earn it.
- B. They refuse to accept it as a gift.
- C. They still feel guilty after receiving forgiveness.
- D. They are fine to keep on sinning since they can be forgiven.
- E. They brag about falling short of God's ideal.
- F. They claim that they aren't that bad.
- G. They treat it glibly—like it's no big deal.
- H. They feel no need to forgive others.
- I. Other.

**4. According to Paul, what is the purpose of God's law?**

- A. It shows us what God is like.
- B. Without it, we wouldn't know what to do and what not to do.
- C. To show we are guilty of sin and need a Savior.
- D. To have something to meditate upon, day and night.
- E. To give us a goal to shoot for.
- F. Moses needed something to bring down from Mount Sinai.
- G. It spells out how to relate to God and to others.
- H. So we have a standard rather than just people's opinions.
- I. Other.

**5. What puts a person right with God?**

- A. Being in the right place at the right time.
- B. Trusting God in the form of Jesus.
- C. Going forward during an altar call.
- D. Getting baptized.
- E. Doing daily devotions.
- F. A Christian education.
- G. Getting right with God isn't the same as staying right with God.
- H. Accepting that Jesus traded places with me.
- I. Other.

**6. How is God fair in what he does with the problem of sin and righteousness?**

- A. It really isn't "fair."
- B. A price had to be paid, and He paid it.
- C. What we do doesn't matter.
- D. He takes our righteousness and adds whatever more we need.
- E. I don't know; He makes the rules.
- F. I don't think so; it seems like I get so much more than I deserve.
- G. This way "we owe him" for the rest of our lives.
- H. Other.

**7. When you think about the law of God, what are your thoughts, feelings, and actions?**

**8. Are you right with God? Upon what do you base your assessment?**

# Start with Faith

---

## OPENING QUESTION

---

Who comes to your mind when you think of a “faithful follower of God”?

### READ **Read Romans 4:1–25.**

---

#### **1. Is Abraham your father?**

- A. No.
- B. I’m not Jewish.
- C. I am a spiritual child of Abraham.
- D. I hope he is.
- E. It depends on whether or not I have faith like Abraham did.
- F. What are you talking about?
- G. Everyone can trace their lineage to Abraham.
- H. I’m a child of God; not of Abraham.
- I. Other.

#### **2. How does a Christian get right with God?**

- A. It helps if you’re born into a Christian family.
- B. It’s harder if you’re born into a Christian family.
- C. By praying the “Sinner’s Prayer” and asking God for forgiveness.
- D. Start living like a child of God.
- E. You just have to believe that God is real and that she forgives you.
- F. By becoming a pastor.
- G. You gotta believe; but then you need to obey.
- H. It’s a feeling you get.
- I. Other.

#### **3. How does someone who isn’t a Christian get right with God?**

- A. By doing an about face.
- B. By “bending the knee” and acknowledging God is God (surrender).
- C. Start going to church.
- D. The same way as someone who already is a Christian.
- E. Asking forgiveness and making restitution (where you can).
- F. Read the Bible and pray.
- G. Shed one’s old life and start a brand new life.
- H. Accept Jesus as one’s Savior.
- I. Other.

**4. Why be good and “obey” if faith is all that matters?**

- A. Your life will be better while you wait for Jesus to return.
- B. You’re supposed to do that.
- C. There is no point to it.
- D. If you don’t obey, then you don’t really have faith.
- E. Do you mean “good” regarding behavior or one’s motives?
- F. Obedience reinforces faith.
- G. Faith reinforces obedience.
- H. It makes other people feel better about you.
- I. Other.

**5. How do others know that you’re a Christian?**

- A. They don’t.
- B. I tell them.
- C. I show them.
- D. I trust God (and they know it).
- E. They sometimes ask me.
- F. I talk about God whenever I can.
- G. I read my Bible in public.
- H. I pray before meals.
- I. Other.

**6. What does it mean to have faith in God?**

- A. Believe that God exists.
- B. Depend on God when you get in a bind.
- C. Trust what you know about God, even if it might not make sense.
- D. Keep searching to better understand God.
- E. Take action based on at least a little bit of evidence.
- F. Join a community of God-followers.
- G. It seems very nebulous to me.
- H. Other.

**7. Why do we tend to base a person’s “goodness” on their behavior?**

**8. What do you find difficult to believe about God?**

# Who's Your Daddy?

---

## OPENING QUESTION

---

In what ways are you like your daddy (or father figure)?

## READ Romans 5:1—21.

---

### 1. What do you get when you're justified (put right) with God *(vs. 1-5)*?

- A. Verdict of "not guilty."
- B. Forgiveness.
- C. Peace and love.
- D. Problems and trials.
- E. Lots of friends.
- F. Character development and endurance.
- G. Salvation, confidence, and privileges.
- H. The Holy Spirit in your life.
- I. Other.

### 2. How do the actions of Jesus change how you relate to God?

- A. I love Jesus more than I love God.
- B. Jesus shows me better what God is like.
- C. Jesus puts me in a positive relationship with God.
- D. I don't think Jesus changes how I relate to God.
- E. Now I run toward God instead of away from God.
- F. Jesus is God.
- G. I think more about Jesus and hardly ever think about the Holy Spirit.
- H. I feel like I'm part of God's family now.
- I. Other.

### 3. What causes you to rejoice *(vs. 3)*?

- A. When things go my way.
- B. When things don't go my way.
- C. Seeing God's activity.
- D. Great music.
- E. Getting out of debt.
- F. Tough times.
- G. Seeing justice where there used to be injustice.
- H. Whatever leads me to depend more on Jesus.
- I. Other.

**4. For whom would you be willing to die?**

- A. Someone in my family (please specify).
- B. My friends.
- C. An enemy.
- D. Nobody.
- E. A person I can't stand.
- F. A complete stranger.
- G. Someone mentally incapacitated.
- H. Someone on death row.
- I. Other.

**5. How do the actions of Jesus change how you relate to God?**

- A. I feel like a friend of God.
- B. It seems like I'm so unworthy.
- C. God seems so much bigger and more powerful now.
- D. I have a better idea of what God is like.
- E. I'm surprised about how much God is like me.
- F. I just hope that I'm ready when Jesus returns.
- G. I really don't think about it much.
- H. I think God is too much of a pushover.
- I. Other.

**6. What makes you a sinner?**

- A. I messed up in the past.
- B. It's not my fault, the devil made me do it.
- C. I've broken God's law.
- D. I haven't reached my full potential yet.
- E. I haven't asked for forgiveness.
- F. I inherited it from Adam.
- G. There's a part of me that just rebels.
- H. I'm not a sinner.
- I. Other.

**7. Do you live more like a child of Adam or a child of Christ? Why? How does it show?**

**8. Where have you seen sin abound? Where have you seen grace abound even more?**

# Dead or Alive; Slave or Free?

---

## OPENING QUESTION

---

What was a bad habit you had during your childhood?

## READ Romans 6:1—23.

---

### 1. Since God forgives us, does it really matter whether or not we sin?

- A. Yes.
- B. No.
- C. Our motives are more important than our behaviors.
- D. Only if God catches us.
- E. He will forgive us 70 x 7 times; then He's done.
- F. He'd like for us to do better.
- G. It tears him up.
- H. It tears us up.
- I. Other.

### 2. When did you "die with Christ" (vs. 3)?

- A. When you were born.
- B. When you got baptized.
- C. When you gave up on trying to make it happen on your own.
- D. I'm not sure that I have died with Christ.
- E. This makes absolutely no sense to me.
- F. I don't have a specific time.
- G. I went forward during an altar call.
- H. When I was at the top of my game.
- I. Other.

### 3. When were you resurrected to a new life (vs. 4)?

- A. What?
- B. When you got baptized.
- C. Nothing really stands out in my memory.
- D. When Jesus became like a friend to me.
- E. When I finally discovered the purpose of my life.
- F. I could use a new life right now.
- G. At Christ's Second Coming I'll get my new life.
- H. When I prayed to God and gave him my life.
- I. Other.