



Discovery Bible Study

Stories of Hope

Introduction

Have you ever wondered if God is interested in your life? Are you interested in knowing more about Jesus? Maybe you are interested in knowing what the Bible says, but never felt comfortable going into a church? Discover the Bible is a great way to explore life's deeper questions with your friends in the comfort of your home or a local coffee shop. Around the world this approach is changing lives daily. Why not give it a go and see if the Bible has anything to say to you today?

How it works

Discovery Bible Study is an easy way to explore what the Bible has to say for yourself. So how do you get started?

We find that it works best if you gather a few friends and go through the studies together. Groups of between four and eight people are good. Everyone will have a slightly different perspective and as each person shares their insights your understanding as a group will grow. So find a comfortable location to meet, grab a coffee and dive in.

Start off by reading or listening to the Bible story. You can use this booklet or the **Discover App** for this. You might like to read the story a couple of times to get more familiar with it. When you are ready have someone in the group retell the story in their own words. Don't worry too much about getting it completely right. After they have finished anyone else can chip in and fill in any missing bits. If you are in a larger group you might like to do this bit in pairs.

Once everyone is familiar with the story, go through the questions. We always use the same four questions. They are easy to remember but surprisingly effective at helping to unpack the story. Take time to ensure that everyone has a chance to speak. If you are not sure how what someone is saying relates to the story, ask them "Where do you see that in the passage?"

For the last two questions we encourage you to make "I will" statements that you really intend to do. For example "I will stop and think before I criticise someone" or "I will tell my sister".

From session two onwards it is useful to start each study by reviewing the previous session. Chat through your "I will" statements and see how everybody got on with them. Take some time to encourage each other.

When you have finished the study ask everyone what is making them happy this week and what they are struggling with. Are there ways as a group that you can support each other?

As you tell other people about what you are learning, you may find that people ask to join your group. That's great! Rather than growing your group, however, it is better to ask them if they would like to find a few friends and start a new group themselves. As you have already seen it is very easy to do, and you don't need to be an expert to lead.

Step by step guide

Before you begin take some time to think about last week's session and how things have gone since then. Then answer these questions together

- What is making you happy this week?
- What are you struggling with this week?
- How did you get on with your "I Will Statements" from the previous session?
- Who did you tell and how did that go?

Step 1: Read the story

Read or listen to the passage

Step 2: Retell the Story

Take a few moments to retell the story in your own words. You may want to speak it out loud, or write it down. If you find you are struggling to remember it, read or listen to it again.

Step 3: Discover the Story

When you feel that you are familiar with the story, take some time to think over or discuss the following questions:

- What does this story tell me about God?
- What does this story tell me about people?
- If this is really God's word, what changes would I have to make in my life?
- Who am I going to tell?

One Hope for the Rejected

Luke 7:36-50

³⁶ One of the Pharisees invited Jesus to come and eat with him. Jesus went to the Pharisee's house and sat down to eat the meal. ³⁷ A woman who was a sinner in that town found out that Jesus was eating in the Pharisee's house. She went there, carrying an alabaster jar of perfume. ³⁸ She kneeled beside Jesus and with her tears wet his feet, and dried them with her hair. She kissed his feet, and then she poured the perfume over them.

³⁹ When the Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw this he said to himself, "If this man was really a prophet he would know who this woman was who's touching him, and what kind of person she was—that she's a sinner!"

⁴⁰ Jesus spoke up and said, "Simon, I have something to tell you."

"Tell me, Teacher," he responded.

⁴¹ "Once two people were in debt to a money-lender. One owed five hundred *denarii*, the other only fifty. ⁴² Neither of them could repay him, so he forgave the debts. Which one will love him the most?"

⁴³ "The one he forgave the most, I would think," Simon answered.

"You're absolutely right," said Jesus. ⁴⁴ Turning to the woman, he said to Simon, "You see this woman? When I came into your house, you didn't give me water to wash my feet. But she has washed my feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You didn't give me a kiss, but since I came in she hasn't stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶ You didn't anoint my head with oil, but she poured perfume over my feet. ⁴⁷ So I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—that's why she loves so much. But whoever is forgiven little, only loves a little." ⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins have been forgiven."

⁴⁹ Those who were sitting eating with him began talking among themselves, saying, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" ⁵⁰ But Jesus told the woman, "Your trust has saved you, go in peace."

Two Hope for the Non-Religious

Luke 18:9-17

⁹ He also told this story about those who are so sure that they are living right, and who put everybody else down. ¹⁰ “Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood up and prayed to himself, ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—cheats, criminals, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week, and I pay tithes on my income.’

¹³ But the tax collector stood at a distance. He wouldn't even look up to heaven. Instead he beat his chest and prayed, ‘God, please be merciful to me. I am a sinner.’

¹⁴ I tell you, it was this man who went home right in God's sight and not the other. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, while those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

¹⁵ Parents were bringing their infants to Jesus to have him bless them by his touch. When the disciples saw what was happening, they tried to stop them. ¹⁶ But Jesus called the children to him. “Let the little children come to me,” he said. “Don't prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to those who are like them. ¹⁷ I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

Three Hope Changes Things

Luke 19:1-10

¹ Jesus entered Jericho and walked through the town. ² A man was there named Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector. He was very rich. ³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he couldn't see over the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead, and climbed up a sycamore tree to see Jesus as he passed by.

⁵ When Jesus got there, he looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, come down quickly! I need to stay at your house today."

⁶ Zacchaeus climbed down quickly and was so happy to welcome Jesus to his home.

⁷ When the people saw this they all complained, "He's gone to stay with such a sinner!"

⁸ But Zacchaeus stood up and said before the Lord, "Look, I'm giving half of everything I own to the poor, and if I've cheated anybody, I'll pay them back four times as much!"

⁹ In response Jesus said, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man has shown he is a son of Abraham too. ¹⁰ For the Son of man came to search for and save those who are lost."

Four Hope Helps Others

Luke 5:17-26

¹⁷ One day when Jesus was teaching, the Pharisees and religious teachers who had come from all over Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem were sitting there. The power of the Lord to heal was with him so he could heal. ¹⁸ Some men arrived carrying a paralyzed man on a mat. They tried to take him in and lay him in front of Jesus. ¹⁹ But they couldn't find any way through the crowd, so they went up on the roof and made a hole in the roof tiles. Then they lowered the man down on the mat, right into the crowd in front of Jesus.

²⁰ When Jesus saw the trust they had in him, he said to the man, "Your sins are forgiven."

²¹ The religious teachers and the Pharisees began to argue with that. "Who is this who's speaking blasphemies?" they asked. "Who can forgive sins? Only God can do that!"

²² Jesus knew what they were arguing about, so he asked them, "Why are you thinking to question this? ²³ What is easier? To say your sins are forgiven, or to say get up and walk? ²⁴ However, I will prove to you that the Son of man has the authority here on earth to forgive sins." Then he said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you: Get up, pick up your mat, and go home."

²⁵ Immediately the man stood up in front of them. He picked up the mat he'd been lying on, and went home, praising God as he went. ²⁶ Everyone was completely astonished at what had happened, and in great awe they praised God, saying, "What we saw today was amazing!"

Five Hope Forgives

Matthew 18:21-35

²¹ Peter came to Jesus and asked him, “How many times should I forgive my brother for sinning against me? Seven times?”

²² “No, not seven times. I would say seventy times seven!” Jesus told him. ²³ “This is why the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with those servants who owed him money. ²⁴ As he began to settle accounts, one servant was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. ²⁵ Since he didn't have the money to pay, his master ordered him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all his possessions, so that the debt could be paid back. ²⁶ The servant fell down on his knees and said to his master, ‘Please be patient with me! I will pay everything back!’ ²⁷ The master took pity on the servant, released him, and canceled the debt. ²⁸ But when that same servant went out he found one of his fellow-servants who owed him just a hundred *denarii*. He grabbed him by the neck and choked him, saying, ‘Pay me back what you owe me!’ ²⁹ His fellow-servant threw himself down at the man's feet and begged him, ‘Please be patient with me! I will pay you back!’ ³⁰ But the man refused, and went and threw his fellow-servant into prison until he paid back what he owed.

³¹ When the other servants saw what took place they were shocked and upset. They went and told their master everything that had happened. ³² Then the master called the man back in and told him, ‘You evil servant! I forgave you all your debt because you begged me to. ³³ Shouldn't you have been merciful to your fellow-servant as well, just as I was merciful to you?’ ³⁴ His master became angry and handed him over to the jailors until he had repaid all the debt. ³⁵ This is what my heavenly Father will do to every one of you unless you sincerely forgive your brothers.”

Six Hope Through Death

Luke 23:32-43

³² They also took two others who were criminals to be executed with him. ³³ When they reached the place called the Skull they crucified him together with the criminals, one on his right, and the other on his left.

³⁴ Jesus said, “Father, please forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing.” They divided up his clothes by throwing dice for them.

³⁵ The people stood and watched and the leaders sneered at Jesus. “He saved others, let him save himself, if he is really God's Messiah, the Chosen One,” they said.

³⁶ The soldiers also mocked him, coming up to him and offering him wine vinegar, saying, ³⁷ “If you're the King of the Jews, then save yourself.”

³⁸ Above Jesus was a sign on which it was written, “This is the King of the Jews.”

³⁹ One of the criminals hanging there joined in the insults against Jesus. “Aren't you the Messiah?” he asked. “Then save yourself—and us too!”

⁴⁰ But the other criminal disagreed and argued with him, “Don't you fear God even when you're suffering the same punishment?” he asked. ⁴¹ “For us the sentence is right since we're being punished for what we did, but this man didn't do anything wrong.”

⁴² Then he said, “Jesus, please remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

⁴³ Jesus replied, “I promise you today you will be with me in paradise.”

Seven Hope Rose from the Dead

Luke 24:1-32

¹ Very early on the first day of the week, the women went to the tomb, taking the spices they'd prepared. ² They found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance to the tomb, ³ but when they went in they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were wondering what was going on, two men suddenly appeared dressed in clothes that shone brilliantly. ⁵ The women were terrified and bowed down, their faces on the ground.

They said to the women, "Why are you looking for someone who is alive among the dead? ⁶ He's not here; he's risen from the dead! Remember what he told you while you were still in Galilee: ⁷ 'The Son of man must be betrayed into the hands of evil men, be crucified, and on the third day rise again.'"

⁸ Then they remembered what he'd said. ⁹ When they returned from the tomb they reported all that had happened to the eleven disciples and to all the others. ¹⁰ Those who told the apostles what had happened were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and other women with them. ¹¹ But it seemed like nonsense to them, so they didn't believe the women. ¹² However, Peter got up and ran to the tomb. Bending down, he looked in and saw only the linen grave-clothes. So he went back home, wondering what had happened.

¹³ The same day two disciples were on their way to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ They were talking about all that had happened. ¹⁵ As they discussed and debated, Jesus came up and fell into step with them. ¹⁶ But they were kept from recognizing him.

¹⁷ "What are you discussing as you walk along?" he asked them. They stopped, their faces sad. ¹⁸ One of them, called Cleopas, replied, "Are you just visiting Jerusalem? You must be the only person who doesn't know the things that have happened in the past few days."

¹⁹ "What things?" Jesus asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet who spoke powerfully and performed great miracles before God and all the people. ²⁰ But our high priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. ²¹ We had hoped he was the one who was going to rescue Israel. It's been three days now since all this happened.

²² But then some of the women in our group surprised us. ²³ At dawn they went to the tomb and they didn't find his body. They came back saying that they'd seen a vision of angels who told them he's alive. ²⁴ Some of us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women said—but they didn't see him."

²⁵ Jesus told them, "You're so dull! How slow you are to trust in all that the prophets said! ²⁶ Didn't the Messiah have to suffer before he could enter into his glory?" ²⁷ Then, starting with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them everything that was said in Scripture about himself.

²⁸ As they approached the village they were going to, Jesus made it seem as if he was going farther. ²⁹ But they urged him, saying, "Please come and stay with us. It's getting late—the day is almost over." So he went to stay with them.

³⁰ When he sat down to eat with them, he took the bread and gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. Then he disappeared from view.

³² The two disciples said to each other, “Weren't our thoughts on fire when he spoke to us, as he explained the Scriptures to us?”

Eight Hope is Waiting for You

Luke 15:11-32

¹¹ Once there was a man who had two sons,” Jesus explained. ¹² “The younger one told his father, ‘Father, give me my inheritance now.’ So the man divided his property between them. ¹³ A few days later the younger son packed up what he had and left for a distant country. Here he wasted all his money living a reckless life.

¹⁴ After he'd spent everything, the country was hit by a severe famine and he was starving. ¹⁵ So he went and took a job with one of the farmers there who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He was so hungry that he would have eaten even the pig food, but no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ When he came to his senses, he said to himself, ‘All of my father's workers have more than enough to eat—why am I dying from hunger here? ¹⁸ I'm going home to my father! I'll tell him: Father, I've sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I'm no longer worthy to be called your son. Please treat me as one of your hired workers.’ ²⁰ So he left and went home to his father.

Even though he was still far away in the distance, his father saw him coming, and his heart went out to his son. The father ran to his son, hugging and kissing him. ²¹ The son said to him, ‘Father, I've sinned against heaven and against you. I'm no longer worthy to be called your son.’

²² But the father told his servants, ‘Quick—bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the calf we've been fattening and kill it. Let's have a feast to celebrate ²⁴ because this is my son who was dead, but who has returned alive; he was lost but now he's found.’ So they started celebrating.

²⁵ Now the older son was working out in the fields. As he walked towards the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked what was going on.

²⁷ ‘Your brother is back,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he's come home safe and sound.’

²⁸ The brother became angry. He refused to go in. So his father came out to plead with him.

²⁹ He told his father, ‘Look, all these years I've served you, and never disobeyed you, but you never once gave me even a young goat so I could have a party with my friends.

³⁰ Now this son of yours comes back, having spent your money on prostitutes, and you kill the fattened calf for him!’

³¹ ‘Son,’ the father replied, ‘you are always here with me. Everything I have is yours.

³² But we should be happy and celebrate! This is your brother who was dead, but who has returned alive; he was lost but now he's found!’”

Conclusion

We hope that you enjoyed going through the Bible together. We'd love to hear any stories of how it has changed your life. The great news is that discovering the Bible doesn't stop here. If you would like to dive deeper, there are other study series in the **Discover App**. You can also use the study questions to explore any passage that you choose.

If you have enjoyed this series, why not encourage your friends and families to get a group going and go through the studies together?



<https://discoverapp.org/get>

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