

DEFINED

Who God Says You Are



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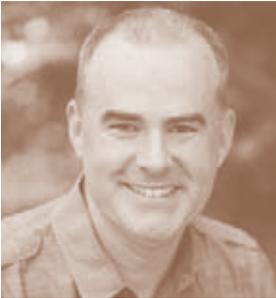
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About the Authors



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Stephen and his family live in Albany, Georgia, where they're members of Sherwood Church. Most important, as affirmed by this Bible study, he's a child of God whose citizenship is in heaven.



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Introduction

Who is God?

Who am I?

Perhaps you mostly already know the answers to these two questions, you'd say. You know who God is, basically. You know who you are, basically. Or perhaps you'd say nobody can really know these answers, not enough to get past all their philosophical aspects where they can do a person any practical good.

But actually, these two basic questions and their answers are of immense, gut-level importance to the everyday life you're experiencing right now. Even in their simplicity these questions speak to your complexity. They're not just philosophical. They're essential. They're imperative. They're tied directly and distinctly to your right-this-moment concerns and problems.

And even if you indeed know solid answers to each of them, human beings are always subject to believing lies or distortions about them and then ingesting those lies as truth, based on the unreliable gauges of feelings, opinions, or cultural pressure.

Good news: the truth we all need in seeking answers to these vital questions has been made abundantly available to us. In the Bible. God Himself has told us.

The next piece of good news, though it's somewhat unexpected, is that these two questions are permanently joined together. The more we know and understand God—Who is God?—the better we can know and understand ourselves—Who am I? We can answer both answers at the same time. And that's what this Bible study is about.

The Creator defines His creation, and because God created you, discovering who He is will tell you who you are. Over the next eight weeks you'll seek to learn about God and yourself and to apply the answers to these questions in your life.

How to Use This Study

This Bible-study book includes eight weeks of content for group and personal study.

Group Sessions

Regardless of what day of the week your group meets, each week of content begins with the group session. Each group session uses the following format to facilitate simple yet meaningful interaction among group members, with God's Word, and with the teaching of Stephen and Alex Kendrick.

START. This page includes questions to get the conversation started and to introduce the video teaching.

WATCH. This page provides space to take notes on the video teaching.

DISCUSS. This page includes questions and statements that guide the group to respond to the Kendricks' video teaching and to explore relevant Bible passages.

Personal Study

Each week provides five days of Bible study and learning activities for individual engagement between group sessions. The personal study revisits stories, Scriptures, and themes introduced in the video teaching so that participants can understand and apply them on a personal level. The days are numbered 1–5 to provide personal reading and activities for each day of the week, leaving two days off to worship with your church family and to meet as a small group. If your group meets on the same day as your worship gathering, use the extra day to reflect on what God is teaching you and to practice putting the biblical principles into action.

Day 5 of each week's personal study includes an exercise asking you to summarize the five key points you've learned over the past week.

Begin by listing five benefits you hope to gain from this Bible study.

1.

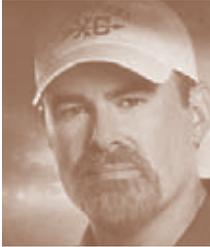
2.

3.

4.

5.

ABOUT THE MOVIE OVERCOMER



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MEET JOHN.

When circumstances beyond his control unravel the name he has built for himself, John Harrison “becomes the least likely coach helping the least likely runner attempt the impossible in the biggest race of the year.”¹

MEET HANNAH.

She’s on a journey of discovery. Like most adolescents, she wants to know where she came from, what she’s good at, what it means to be part of a family, and where real value is found in life. Those are questions about identity.



AFFIRM Films A Sony Company © 2019 CTMG.

Life changes overnight for coach John Harrison when his high-school basketball team’s state-championship dreams are crushed under the weight of unexpected news. When the largest manufacturing plant in town suddenly shuts down and hundreds of families begin moving away, John must come to grips with the challenges facing his family and his team. Urged by the school’s principal to fill in and coach a sport he doesn’t know or like, John is frustrated and questions his worth until he crosses paths with a student struggling with her own journey.

Filled with a powerful mix of faith, a twist of humor, and a ton of heart, the Kendrick brothers return to theaters with *OVERCOMER*, their newest feature following *FACING THE GIANTS*, *FIREPROOF*, *COURAGEOUS*, and the number one box-office hit *WAR ROOM*. The inspiring family film stars Alex Kendrick, Priscilla Shirer, Shari Rigby, Cameron Arnett, and introduces Aryn Wright-Thompson. *OVERCOMER* dares to leave you filled with hope, inspired to dream, and asks the question, What do you allow to define you?

FOR MORE ABOUT THE MOVIE, PLEASE VISIT
OVERCOMERMOMIE.COM

1. Jeannie Law, “New Kendrick Bros. Movie ‘OVERCOMER’ Based on Finding One’s Identity in God, Stars Priscilla Shirer,” *The Christian Post*, August 3, 2018, <https://www.christianpost.com/news/kendrick-brothers-movie-overcomer-based-on-finding-identity-in-god-stars-priscilla-shirer-226556/>.

Week 1

CREATED
BY GOD



Start

Welcome to week 1 of *Defined*. We hope this Bible study changes your life in many ways, most specifically in the way you see your identity. We can't wait to hear how God works in and through you.

Let's take a moment to get to know one another before we watch this week's video.

Tell us your name and something about yourself.

Why did you choose to share that information about yourself? (Was it unique? Something you shared in common with others in the group? Just based on other people's answers?)

What are some common ways to define identity?

What do you hope to gain from this study of identity?

Through this study you'll learn what God's Word says about who you are and how to live out your true identity.

Take a moment to pray with your group. Pray that God will teach you through the group sessions and the personal studies. Pray that everyone in your group will have open hearts and minds. Pray that God will unify you as a group and will help you be vulnerable in sharing with one another for the next eight weeks. Thank Him for the opportunity to study His Word together.

After praying, watch the video teaching.

Watch

Use this section to take notes as you watch video session 1.

We don't want to let changing things determine our identity.

We have to be really careful that we don't let feelings determine what we believe about ourselves.

Four Rights God Has to Declare Who You Are

1. He created you.
2. God owns us.
3. God has authority.
4. God knows us better than anyone.

The Creator gets to define His creation.

God lovingly, intentionally, and wisely designed and made each one of us in His image on purpose for His glory.

Everybody is God-planned.

Discuss

After viewing the video, discuss the following questions with your group.

What points in the video were most significant for you?

What are some influences other than God's Word that try to define us?
How does each of those false definitions result in bondage?

Read Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 24:1; 139:1-4,16; Isaiah 64:8; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. What do these verses reveal about God's right to define your life? What do they reveal about your identity?

What does it mean for people to be created in the image of God (*imago Dei*)? What do we share in common? How are we unique?

What freedoms and benefits come from embracing God's design for life?
What are some consequences of rejecting God's design?

On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being trash and 10 being treasure), how valuable do you secretly believe you are? With what value do you treat other people around you?

What part of your life or family is the hardest detail to thank God for?
How could God use even your broken and painful experiences for good?
Even if you don't currently see how something could be used for good, what has today's teaching emphasized about your life?

In what ways has this session been encouraging, convicting, or well timed?

After discussion, close the session with prayer.



Day 1
WHO IS GOD?

The opening chapters of the Bible present the beginning of life from two perspectives. In fact, the title of the first book of the Bible, Genesis, is taken from the very first word in the original Hebrew language, meaning “beginning” or “origin.” Chapter 1 of Genesis is a grand, sweeping overview, as though a camera were zoomed out as far as we could imagine, drawing closer and closer as creation grows increasingly complex. In chapter 2 we jump to a close-up scene within the story that we’ll examine in more depth tomorrow. For now don’t rush past the opening chapter. Don’t even rush past the opening words. This isn’t an introduction you can omit to get to the real story. This is the opening scene of the same story you’re living in today. This is where it all begins—literally.

Record Genesis 1:1 either from memory or after looking it up.

What’s significant about this first sentence in the Bible? Record all this sentence teaches us about God, ourselves, and life in general.

God:

Ourselves:

Life:

Use the chart to record what God created on each day in Genesis 1.

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Day 1 (vv. 3-5) | Day 2 (vv. 6-8) | Day 3 (vv. 9-13) |
| Day 4 (vv. 14-19) | Day 5 (vv. 20-23) | Day 6 (vv. 24-31) |

Has it ever occurred to you just how unthinkable it is that light was created on the first day, but the sun, moon, and stars weren't created until the fourth day? Light existed before what we consider the sources of light. But in God's infinite wisdom even His creation revealed information about Himself to us (see Rom. 1:20). The first three days established natural domains, and then God gave living creatures dominion to "be fruitful, multiply" (Gen. 1:22), filling each of those environments.

What does the repeated pattern of "Then God said. ... And it was so" teach you about God, ourselves, and life in general?

God:

Ourselves:

Life:

What does the repeated declaration of "It was good" teach you about God, ourselves, and life in general?

God:

Ourselves:

Life:

What does the repeated blessing of "Be fruitful, multiply" teach you about God, ourselves, and life in general?

God:

Ourselves:

Life:

You can't know who you are without first knowing who God is. The Bible starts with the account of creation, not merely for the order of events but also for the foundation of truth. He isn't just the Creator. He's your Creator, and you're His good creation.

Conclude today's personal study by reflecting on the following prayer from God's Word. Take a moment to praise your Creator for who He is and for how much He loves you.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ ..., who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ.

EPHESIANS 1:2-3



Day 2
WHO AM I?

How would you describe yourself? What defines your identity?

Following the epic account of the first six days of creation, Genesis 2 zooms in for a close-up of the first man and woman as they opened their eyes to behold the miracle of life. The Lord God, who had just spoken light, planets, and every living and nonliving thing into existence, now changed the rhythm. It was no longer “God said, ‘Let there be ...’”

The LORD God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being.

GENESIS 2:7

The LORD God made the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man.

GENESIS 2:22

In the intimate account of their creation, God breathed life into man’s nostrils and personally shaped the man and woman from earth and bone. The personal relationship between God and humanity became unmistakably clear. You aren’t just one more part of the natural order:

*God created man in his own image;
he created him in the image of God;
he created them male and female.*

GENESIS 1:27

Why is it important to know that men and women are created in the image of God? What dignity and worth come from our relationship to God?

The image of God doesn't designate just a physical resemblance. The word *image* literally means "icon." Men and women represent God and relate to Him in a way that's different from all other created beings. All human beings from Adam and Eve onward are created to know and relate to God. Each person is a unique and beloved creation of God. Look at what Ephesians says later in the Bible:

We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.

EPHESIANS 2:10

If God specifically created you for His good purpose, what can't be true about your life? What has to be true about your life?

You possess a soul that enables you to know God in a way that's different from animals, plants, mountains, and all other created things. Your soul gives you a capacity to enter a personal relationship with your Father. Wrapped up in your identity is your responsibility to represent God and demonstrate His rule and reign over all creation (see Gen. 1:28). You've been created for a purpose. You can trust that whatever God's plan is for your life, you're perfectly suited for the work.

Now you probably want to know what you're supposed to *do*. What's God's plan for your life? The truth is that God first wants you to know who He created you to *be*. When you know who you are, you'll know how to act. Without understanding your identity, you aimlessly fumble around no matter what you do.

Identity is everything. Who you are matters. In fact, it matters every day. And who God is defines your identity. *Who* you are is determined by *whose* you are:

I have called you by your name; you are mine.

ISAIAH 43:1

How does believing you were created by God and belong to Him affect the way you see yourself? How does it affect the way you see your life?

Before your mind starts racing toward all the things you need to do, pause and thank God for everything He has already done. Conclude your time of personal study by declaring that you're His and that therefore you trust in His plan for your life.



Day 3

WHEN DID GOD BECOME INVOLVED IN OUR LIVES?

We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.

EPHESIANS 2:10

There's a reason we started this week's study with the first sentence in the Bible. It not only shows us that God is absolutely supreme—that He existed before all things and all things exist by the power of His will—but also points to the reality that we aren't accidents, afterthoughts, or abandoned ideas. God has been involved in our lives since the beginning of time. That doesn't mean He cared only about Adam and Eve, whom He fashioned by hand. He also knit each of us together, every intricate detail, in our mothers' wombs.

God has an intimate relationship with all people even before they're born. Psalm 139 beautifully addresses this reality, but there's a distinction between agreeing with this truth and embracing it as something that's true about you.

Read Psalm 139:1-6. Respond to the questions with details from your life.

What time did you wake up today?

Where will/did you go today?

Whom did/will you talk to today?

Read Psalm 139:7-12. Respond to the questions with details from your life.

Where do you live?

What are your favorite places to go?

When do you feel anxious or insignificant?

When do you feel most confident and alive?

Read Psalm 139:13-18. Respond to the questions with details from your life.

Describe your physical appearance.

Describe any physical limitations.

When and where were you born?

Describe your home life growing up.

Describe your life now.

Read Psalm 139:19-22. Respond to the questions with details from your life.

What hypocrisy do you hate in yourself or in others?

What tragedies have you endured?

What injustices have you witnessed?

Read Psalm 139:23-24. Respond to the questions with details from your life.

What sin or hypocrisy needs to be confessed and removed from your life?

Describe your current relationship with God.

Describe your desired relationship with God.

The most important fact about you is that God created you. The second most important fact about you is that God created you wonderfully:

I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;

Wonderful are Your works,

And my soul knows it very well.

PSALM 139:14, NASB

To conclude your time of study, review Psalm 139 verse by verse as a personal prayer, using the details you recorded during today's reflection.



Day 4
**HOW IS GOD
INVOLVED IN
OUR LIVES?**

God created us, has a plan for our lives, and has never abandoned His personal involvement in our lives. He always has been, always is, and always will be accomplishing His great purpose. In day 2 we saw that God's first desire is for us to know who we are. When we look at Scripture, we see that God gave Adam not only an identity but also a place, a partner, provision, a purpose, and parameters. When we recognize God's careful intention, we start to realize how important our God-given identity really is.

Read Genesis 2:4-9. What do we learn about the place God prepared for Adam? What does this place teach us about God? What does it teach us about Adam?

Read Genesis 2:15-25. What purpose did God give Adam? What does this purpose teach us about the relationship between God and Adam?

Our identity is formed by the place God puts us in and the purpose He gives to us. God placed people in a position of dominion so that we can join Him in His work of bringing life and order in the world. The garden and the call to do meaningful work came before the fall. God created us to thrive and flourish as He intended, to know Him personally, and to trust Him fully. The place and purpose God has given to all of us reveal His desire to be intimately involved in our lives.

What does the fact that God gave Adam work, a partner, and instructions in a perfect garden teach you about your identity and purpose?

Like our place and purpose, God's design for our partner came before the fall. Adam didn't request a wife; rather, God gave Adam a partner out of His own goodness. God deeply cares about our relationships with other people. He defines who we are and gives us all we need to live out our identity. His purposeful intention is evident in the parameters God sets for our lives.

Read the apostle Paul's words to the people of Athens in Acts 17:22-34. How would you describe God's involvement in human lives since the beginning with Adam and Eve? How and why has He been working?

How does Paul's teaching on false beliefs about God address your own tendencies in today's culture, even without physical shrines and idols?

God doesn't need us to serve Him; He isn't helpless without us or dependent on us (see v. 25). We aren't expected to work *for* God. We're invited to work *with* God within the parameters He has set. He's continually involved in our lives and invites us to follow Him into fullness of life. The LORD God is at work *in* us and all *around* us, and He desires to work *through* us as well. Primarily, we join God in His work when we seek to know Him and point others toward Him.

How could God be working around and through you, providing ways to join Him in bringing abundant life, order, and flourishing to your area of influence?

Conclude your time of personal study by considering the ways God is at work in your life, whatever your work and routine may be. Ask Him for courage to trust and obey Him completely. Pray for opportunities to share the truth about your Creator and LORD God with others so that they can know Him too.



Day 5
TAKE FIVE: LIFE

Record the five main takeaways God taught you through the group session and personal studies this week. You may want to choose one truth from each day, or certain days may have been especially meaningful to you.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Just as each person's hand is created in the same way but has unique fingerprints, God's Word remains the same, but each person hears and applies it in specific ways at different seasons in his or her life. Your DNA, the shape of your ear, the pattern in the iris of your eye, the combination of your physical features, the stride of your walk are all unique to you as an individual. You're skillfully and wonderfully made—one of a kind. But the common bond we all share as human beings is that we're created in the image of God.

In the movie business the phrase "Take five" means to take a short break of approximately five minutes. As you complete this study, it's important that you take a break, not just to relax from studying but to reflect on what you've been studying. Don't rush through the content each week. Pause to consider some key takeaways. What are the main truths you need to retain in order to have a good grasp of each week's topic? What was most significant? What challenged, convicted, or encouraged you?

This time can be as brief or as long as you need it to be. The aim is to identify truths you don't want to forget—truths you want to take with you when you move on to the next part of this study and, most important, to the next phase of your life.

Look at the natural world around you. God's fingerprints are all over it:

*The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the expanse proclaims the work of his hands.
Day after day they pour out speech;
night after night they communicate knowledge.
There is no speech; there are no words;
their voice is not heard.
Their message has gone out to the whole earth,
and their words to the ends of the world.
In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun.
It is like a bridegroom coming from his home;
it rejoices like an athlete running a course.*

PSALM 19:1-5

Read Psalm 19 in your Bible. Let it guide a time of prayerful reflection.