The goal of this study is to put the past four studies together in such a way that they create a big picture of what God has done to bring us back to relationship with himself.

Teachers: We recommend that you use a whiteboard/paperboard for drawing the illustrations out for your group.

1. **WHO GOD IS:** (see if they can remember the characteristics and what they mean)
   - **HOLY** completely righteous, pure – no evil, can’t be in presence of evil
   - **JUST** hates injustice, will do what is right – judges against his holy standard
   - **LOVE** unconditional

2. **WE WERE CREATED:**
   - **HOLY / PERFECT** morally pure, righteous
   - **RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD** us enjoying God, God enjoying us – intimacy with God
   - **REPRESENT GOD** represent his rule and character to the rest of creation
Adam & Eve: Sinned

Adam & Eve chose to rebel against God by eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good & Evil which they were told not to.

**Genesis 2:16-17 (NIV)**

16 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

**Genesis 3:6 (NIV)**

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Because God is...

1) **HOLY**: we are now SEPARATED FROM GOD

God cannot be united with that which is sinful. By disobeying God, Adam and Eve brought sin into their lives thereby cutting themselves off from the presence of the Holy God.

**Isaiah 59:2 (NLT)**

But there is a problem—your sins have cut you off from God. Because of your sin, he has turned away and will not listen anymore.
2) **JUST:** we are **UNDER JUDGEMENT**

God’s justice demands that he acts against sin, giving it the only appropriate consequence – death. God cannot let any evil go undealt with that would work against his standard of absolute perfection and holiness. Anyone who separates himself from the life-giving God is only left with death.

*Romans 2:5 (NIV)*

But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God’s wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

**5 THE CONSEQUENCE:** **DEATH**

*Romans 6:23 (NLT)*

For the wages of sin is death

**6 WE REACT TO THE PROBLEM BY:**

1) **Not assuming responsibility**

2) **Doing good**

**Sinned against God**

**Separated from God**

**Under Judgment**

**Death**

**Hopeless**

**CONSEQUENCE**

**Death**

*Romans 6:23 (NLT)*

For the wages of sin is death

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**Romans 3:20 (NIV)**

Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

**Romans 3:23 (NLT)**

For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard.
WE REACT TO THE PROBLEM BY:

1) **NOT ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITY**
   
   *Genesis 3:12 (NIV)*
   
   The man said, "The woman you put here with me--she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

   **God’s response:**
   
   *1 John 1:8 (NLT)*
   
   If we say we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth.

2) **DOING GOOD**
   
   “If only my good deeds outweigh my bad ones then I’m safe.”

   **God’s response:**
   
   *Isaiah 64:6 (NLT)*
   
   We are all infected and impure with sin. When we proudly display our righteous deeds, we find they are but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall. And our sins, like the wind, sweep us away.

**EXAMPLE: A police officer pulls you over for speeding**

You explain that you have been driving for the past 5 hours and only speeding for the past 30 minutes. In fact, you stopped at a cross walk and let an old lady cross the street; you even slowed down and stopped for a yellow light. In lieu of your driving for the day, you explain that your good driving far outweighs your bad; therefore you should not receive a ticket.

**How do you think the police office will respond?**

**Why?**

Good driving is the expected norm – that’s just the way we’re supposed to drive. The problem isn’t how much good driving we do, the problem is when we BREAK the LAW. No amount of good driving will make up for the fact that the law is now broken and there needs to be a consequence.

We can try to bridge our way back to God by doing good things (going to church, serving in church, reading your bible, praying, giving to the poor, helping others, etc.) but these are just good things we are to do anyway. Even when we do good – if it’s still outside a relationship with God, then God still calls them evil acts.
Romans 3:23 (NLT)
For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard.

Extra support verses

Romans 3:10-12 (NLT)
10 As the Scriptures say, "No one is good—not even one. 11 No one has real understanding; no one is seeking God. 12 All have turned away from God; all have gone wrong. No one does good, not even one."

Matthew 7:22-23 (NIV)
22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

Romans 3:20 (NIV)
Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

We are entirely **HOPELESS**
There is absolutely nothing we can do to change our situation. There is no way we can make ourselves righteous or holy. We are separated from God and are under his righteous condemnation.

**This is the BAD NEWS...BUT**

God knows our **REBELLIOUS HEARTS** (sin nature)
God knows he must **JUDGE SIN** (death consequence)
**BUT GOD STILL LOVES US**
God devised a plan to bring us back to him — a plan that would come at **GREAT COST**. This is a plan he takes very seriously and we probably should too.
OUR TWO PROBLEMS:
1) Sinful Actions
2) Sinful Nature

Sinned against God
Separated from God
Under Judgment
Death
Hopeless

GOD’S SOLUTION: JESUS comes to earth as a MAN
God chose to take on the FORM OF A MAN (JESUS) and come to earth for one purpose.
To live a sinless life and DIEd as our SUBSTITUTE on the cross

I couldn’t die for you because I’m guilty of my own sins & vice versa.
No one else on earth is sinless. The only one who could be the perfect sinless sacrifice would be God himself, who became man.
BY COMING TO EARTH, JESUS DEALS WITH OUR 2 PROBLEMS

1) JESUS’ DEATH PAYS FOR OUR SINFUL ACTIONS

By dying on the cross, Jesus paid the price for our SINFUL ACTS. Justice is served, our crimes are paid for, and God’s holy wrath is appeased. We can now be forgiven and set free from the consequence of our own sin.

PROBLEM 1 SOLVED

Romans 8:1-4 (NIV)
Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, 4 in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

2) ACCEPTING THE RESURRECTED SPIRIT OF CHRIST GIVES US NEW LIFE, NEW NATURE

Because Jesus conquered death and rose to new life, when we receive his Spirit into our lives his death is applied to us and we are forgiven, but the Spirit of Christ also restores life to our spirit giving us NEW LIFE and a NEW NATURE.

PROBLEM 2 SOLVED

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)
Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

With my sin and sinful nature dealt with, I am now declared HOLY (morally perfect) in God’s sight and can once again be restored to intimate RELATIONSHIP with him.

Romans 5:1 (NIV)
Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

I can now once again start REPRESENTING him to the rest of creation. I’m not practically (nearly) perfect yet, but that will happen on the day Christ returns.
1 Corinthians 15:51-52 (NLT)
But let me tell you a wonderful secret God has revealed to us. Not all of us will die, but we will all be transformed.  
52 It will happen in a moment, in the blinking of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, the Christians who have died will be raised with transformed bodies. And then we who are living will be transformed so that we will never die.

By dying on the cross Jesus bridged the gap between us and God. He removed the barrier of sin. He is the BRIDGE TO LIFE.

This is the message we are committed to sharing with the world. The message is that, through faith in Jesus Christ we can receive forgiveness and be brought back to intimate relationship with God as his child. We can now go through life sharing this good news with others, representing God’s love wherever we go.

So now that Christ has died on the cross to pay the consequence for our sin – does that mean everyone goes to heaven?

No!

Revelation 20:15 (NIV)
If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

So what does one have to do to cross over to God, to get their name written in the Book of Life?

10 WE MUST confess 2 things (which are really two ways of saying the same thing)

1) CONFESS OUR SIN

1 John 1:9 (NLT)
But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong.

Confession here implies that one is truly sorry for a life of sinful rebellion and independence from God. They desire to be forgiven and want to be restored to intimate relationship with God. As a result, they long to turn from sin and live in a way that represents God’s holy character.
2) CONFESS JESUS AS LORD (Life Leader)

*Romans 10:9 (NLT)*
For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

If I am truly sorry for removing God from the picture of my life, the implication is that I want him restored to a proper position in my life. This means I am willing to surrender control of my life and let him be in charge. It is now his life to do whatever he pleases with. I’m content to follow his lead through whatever circumstances he chooses to lead me.

**Where do I stand with regard to God?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I'm not interested in pursuing God.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I'm interested, but I need to know more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want to cross over – I simply haven’t done it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Hurdles to get over**

**Sample Prayer**

“Father, I realize I have led life of sinful independence from you. I have not embraced a loving relationship with you, nor have I represented your holy character in this world. In fact, I’ve done much that has been in direct opposition to you and your plans. I want to say now that I’m sorry and based on what Jesus accomplished on the cross and his resurrection I ask that you forgive me for all my sin. I invite you by your Holy Spirit to come and dwell in my life. Give me a new nature and take the lead of my life. I confess you now to be Lord of my Life. In the name of Jesus I pray this. Amen”

**Luke 15:10 (NIV)**
In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Entering this type of relationship is a lot like getting married. When a proposal is given the other person needs to make a response. It could be:

1) No, I don’t want to marry you
2) I need time to think about this
3) Yes, I’d love to marry you

When it comes to God, God has extended the invitation to covenant relationship with himself.

We need to make a decision about where we stand with regard to that relationship.
Where do you place yourself on this diagram?

1) To the far left saying – “I'M NOT INTERESTED IN PURSUITING GOD”

2) In the middle of the left side saying “I'M INTERESTED, BUT I NEED TO KNOW MORE”
   
   This implies that there are some hurdles that need to be dealt with. They could be intellectual (why should I believe Jesus is God etc.), or they may be rooted in past hurts with churches. Most likely it will be control issues (Am I really willing to trust God and let go of the reins of my life?)

3) On the edge saying, “I WANT TO CROSS OVER, I SIMPLY HAVEN’T DONE IT YET”

4) Right side – “I'VE ALREADY ASKED GOD TO FORGIVE ME AND BE LORD OF MY LIFE”

Have the people check off on their sheet where they believe they are at on their journey.

Some may say that they believe they’re on the Bridge crossing over. But this is not the case. Their name is either written in the book of life or not; they are either forgiven or not; they have either declared Jesus Lord of their life or not; when they die they’re either in heaven or not. NO MIDDLE GROUND.

It is up to you to determine whether your group is a safe enough place for everyone to share where they placed themselves.

For those at stage 3 you can cross over tonight if you wish. This can take place by a simple heart felt prayer. Here is a sample prayer you could say to God.

“Father, I realize I have led a life of sinful independence from you. I have not embraced a loving relationship with you, nor have I represented your holy character in this world. In fact, I’ve done much that has been in direct opposition to you and your plans. I want to say now that I’m sorry, and based on what Jesus accomplished on the cross and his resurrection, I ask that you forgive me for all my sin. I invite you by your Holy Spirit to come and dwell in my life. Give me a new nature and take the lead of my life. I confess you now to be Lord of my life. In the name of Jesus I pray this. Amen”

When someone prays that prayer – all heaven stops what it is doing and celebrates that person.

Luke 15:10 (NIV)

In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

The rejoicing is in front of the angels – guess who is doing the rejoicing? Jesus himself!