

Z-Group

The questions below are designed to help you begin a discussion with students who are using the “Z-Studies” in the *Zelos Journal for Student Disciples*. They may be using the “Z-Studies” for their regular devotions or as part of a discipling relationship. These questions will give a discipler a place to start discussing the material with his or her student or small group. Certain questions can also be chosen to generate discussion in Sunday School.

Please don’t feel you have to get through every question. The idea is to get a discussion

started that will produce teachable moments with your students. Use the questions to help them apply what they’re reading in the Bible to their own lives.

You may be surprised how much help some students need in making the connection between the facts of the Bible and their everyday reality.

It will be extremely helpful if you have read the Scriptures and written in your own copy of the *Zelos Journal*. However, it’s possible to have a valuable teaching experience using the questions below, even if you haven’t

had adequate time to prepare. But always encourage your students to work through the “Z-Studies” before their next weekly meeting with you.

Enjoy. Ask God to use His Word to plant key Biblical principles in the minds of your students. Also ask Him for the wisdom to answer their questions, the courage to speak the truth in love, and the humility to let them see the real, struggling you. Your transparency and faithfulness will tell them more about the power of God’s love than your mastery of the materials.

📅 Week 1

This is the first of four weeks your “Z-Studying” students will spend reading and writing about the Bible. Specifically, they’ll be studying what the Bible says about its own reliability and impact on the human heart. This week, they read passages from Jeremiah, Romans, and James about the human need for outside help from God.

- How do humans do on their own in this life—without God’s advice and direction? Why?
- Why is God more trustworthy than we are?
- Are humans basically good?
- What did Paul write in Romans 3 that affirms that humans are naturally evil?
- Are any humans “righteous” on their own?
- What’s the logical response for someone who realizes he’s going to die without help (James 4)?
- How do we submit ourselves to God and ask for His help?
- What’s the first step toward “giving in” to God?
- What does the Bible have to do with needing God’s help?

📅 Week 2

In this week’s “Z-Studies,” your students read passages about the reliability of God’s revelation to us through Christ and His Word. Passages included 2 Timothy 3:10-17; 1 Peter 1:1-12; and 2 Peter 1:12-21.

- Is life easier for a non-Christian or a Christian? Why do you think so?
- Why did Paul write that anyone who wants to live godly in Christ will be persecuted (2 Tim. 3:12)?
- What does it mean to be persecuted? Have you ever been persecuted?
- How much of the Bible is God-breathed and useful (v. 16)?
- What promise was fulfilled when Jesus came to earth (1 Peter 1:10-12)?
- How much of the prophecy in the Bible was dreamed up or predicted by humans (2 Peter 1:21)?
- How much of the Bible is directly from the mind of God?
- How do we know we can trust it?

3 Week 3

Their study of what the Bible says about the Bible took your “Z-Study”-users through Psalm 119 this week. This psalm is David’s love poem to God about His law, or His Word.

- How can a young person stay pure (Ps. 119:9)?
- Why does living according to God’s Word help us to stay pure?
- Why did David feel so passionately about God’s Word?
- What do you feel that strongly about?
- What do you think it would take to make you feel that kind of emotion about the Word of God?
- Do you think you need to feel strongly about God’s Word to follow it or obey it?
- Did following God’s Word keep David from suffering (vv. 49-50)?
- How did it help him with his hard life?

4 Week 4

This week’s “Z-Studies” took your students through several passages that support the truthfulness and reliability of the Bible, including Acts 1:1-11; Ezekiel 26; and Deuteronomy 6:1-9.

- According to Acts 1, did anyone actually see Jesus with his or her own eyes after He was raised from the dead?
- How important is eyewitness testimony in making the case for the truthfulness of the Bible?
- What prophecy did God give to Ezekiel about the city of Tyre (Ezek. 26)?
- To what extent has that prophecy been fulfilled? [Note: Be prepared to tell your students about the history of Tyre. If you don’t have another source, consult the *Zelos High School Teaching Guide* for this quarter.]
- According to Deuteronomy 6:1-9, what were God’s people told to do with the commands He had given them?
- What can you and I do to make God’s Word a bigger part of our lives?

5 Week 5

This and the following four weeks will take your students on a tour of the Old Testament. The first stops are in Genesis 1; 6; 11; and 12.

- Why is it so important that a full understanding of the Bible includes understanding Genesis 1?
- What’s the danger of not believing that God created the universe in six days?
- Why did God judge the people of the world with a flood?
- Why won’t He do the same thing again?
- How do we escape God’s judgment?
- What hard command did God give to Abram?
- What hard commands has God given to you?
- Describe a time or circumstance when you had to choose to obey God even though His command didn’t make sense to you. What did you obey? Do you think you did the right thing? Why or why not?

6 Week 6

The “Z-Study” tour of the Old Testament this week guided your students through Exodus 5–6; Exodus 20; and Joshua 1. Try to help your students keep the thread of the OT story together in their minds.

- Why didn’t the Israelites listen to Moses when he told them God was going to rescue them from slavery in Egypt (Ex. 6:9)?
- Do you have more trouble believing God when you’re discouraged? Why or why not?
- Did God keep His promise?
- Are the Ten Commandments given in Exodus 20 the whole law of God? What makes those 10 special?
- Why do you think God kept telling Joshua to be strong and courageous in Joshua 1?
- What difference does it make that God was with Joshua and that He’s with us?

7 Week 7

Next stops on the “Z-Study” tour of the Old Testament: Judges 2; 1 Samuel 10:9-27; and four quick stops (Jonah 3:10; Obad. 10; Hosea 1:2, 10-11; and Isa. 53:8-10).

- What was the cycle of the Israelites’ relationship with God as described in Judges 2?
- What was the job of the judges?
- Why did God stop the era of the judges and set up a king to rule over Israel (1 Sam. 10:19)?
- Has God ever allowed you to have something you wanted even though it wasn’t His best for you? What did that teach you?
- What consequences did people in the OT pay for not following God?
- For what reasons would He forgive and restore His people?
- For what reason has God forgiven you, as a Christian?

8 Week 8

This week, our guided and speedy tour of the OT took your “Z-Study”-users through Jeremiah 30, Lamentations 5, and Daniel 2:24-48.

- Why do you think God kept promising to restore Israel even though the people kept disobeying Him (Jer. 30)?
- Why is God so faithful to you?
- Have you ever felt the way the writer of Lamentations 5 seems to have felt?
- He asked God, “Why do you forget us?” (Lam. 5:20). Do you think God had really forgotten them?
- Will God ever forget you—even if you may some day feel that He has?
- Daniel predicted the future, as God revealed it to him (Dan. 2:24-48). How does it make you feel to know that God is in control of the future?
- Do you believe that God is in control of your future, as well as the future of the world? How does that make you feel about your future?

9 Week 9

With this week's "Z-Studies," your students finished their tour of the Old Testament by reading and writing about Nehemiah 2; Haggai 1; and Malachi 2:17-3:17.

- What position did Nehemiah have in the king's court? (cupbearer)
- What job did God have for Nehemiah? (rebuilding Jerusalem's walls)
- What did Nehemiah have to give up to do God's will?
- What would you have to give up to live as God has asked you to?
- What's your definition of a successful life?
- How does what you spend your money on show where your heart is (see Hag. 1)?
- How do you know serving God is worth what it will cost you in this life (see Mal. 2:17-3:17)?

10 Week 10

This began the first of four weeks your students will spend studying the issue of death and dying from a Biblical perspective. The "Z-Studies" for this week focused on the origin of death in Genesis 2-3.

- Why do you think God made that one tree in the garden off-limits to Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:16-17)?
- Why do you think Adam didn't speak up when Eve was being tempted by the snake?
- Do you think Adam was just as guilty as Eve? Why or why not?
- Are you more likely to give in to sin by initiating it yourself or just going along with the crowd?
- Why didn't Adam and Eve just drop dead immediately when they ate the fruit?
- How many kinds of death are there?
- What do you think is the worst part of the curse God gave to Adam and Eve before forcing them to leave the garden?

11 Week 11

This week's "Z-Studies" dealt with the idea of Christ's resurrection and our eventual resurrection. Your students read and wrote about 1 Corinthians 15.

- What evidence did Paul give that Jesus had, in fact, risen from the dead (1 Cor. 15:3-8)?
- Why do you believe that Jesus was raised from the dead?
- How is death our enemy (v. 26)?
- Has this enemy hurt you or your family?
- What will eventually happen to the enemy death (v. 26)?
- What would be the point of Christianity if Jesus didn't (and we won't) rise from the dead (vv. 12-18)?
- How is a seed different from the plant it dies to become?
- How might your current body be different from the body you'll have in heaven (vv. 42-44)?

12 Week 12

This week's "Z-Studies" on death and dying covered the story of Jesus, Lazarus, and a grieving family in John 11.

- How did Jesus feel about Mary, Martha, and Lazarus (John 11:5)?
- Has someone you loved ever died?
- What do you think the family was hoping for when they sent Jesus the message that Lazarus was sick?
- How do you think the family felt when Jesus showed up after Lazarus was already dead?
- Have you ever struggled in your feelings toward God when He didn't answer a prayer request the way you wanted Him to?
- Why do you think Jesus wept when He knew He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead (v. 35)?
- How do you think God feels toward you when your heart is broken?
- Why did Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead (vv. 40-42)?
- Do you believe that you will live again after you die? Why or why not?

13 Week 13

For the last week of this unit and this quarter, the "Z-Studies" took your students into Psalm 139; Acts 16:22-34; and several passages in Job.

- Did God know David before he was born (Ps. 139:13-15)?
- Do you think God was involved in creating your life before you were born?
- Does God know when you will die (v. 16)?
- Why was the jailer described in Acts 16 going to kill himself (v. 27)?
- What's wrong with taking one's own life?
- How did Paul give the jailer immediate hope (v. 28)?
- How did Paul offer the jailer eternal hope (v. 31)?
- What gives you hope in this life and the life to come?
- Are there any passages in Scripture that teach that those who commit suicide don't go to heaven? [No, there aren't. Suicide is definitely wrong, but the Bible does not seem to teach that suicide is an unpardonable sin. Those who have trusted in Christ as Saviour will go to heaven.]
- Why do you think Job wouldn't take his own life—even though he'd lost every earthly reason he had for living?

PHONE CALL PREPARATION SHEET

Look up and summarize the following verses in light of Mr. Thomas's questions:



Jeremiah 17:9:

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James 4:1-3:

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Isaiah 59:2:

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Romans 2:4:

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Romans 3:10-18:

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Romans 1:18:

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Conclusions:

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Inspiration

Under each statement, note whether or not the statement is accurate—and why.

1. Inspiration means that God dictated to His writers everything He wanted written.

2. Because we no longer have the original manuscripts of Scripture, we don't really have the Word of God today.

3. Even though the Bible was inspired by God, it contains lies that were told by others.

4. Every book in the Bible is equally inspired but not necessarily equally important.

5. When the Bible speaks of spiritual things, such as heaven and hell, it is without error. But when it speaks of historical or scientific things, it may or may not be entirely accurate.

6. When God guided His human authors to write His inspired Word, He allowed their individual personalities and writing styles to come through in their Biblical writings.

7. Some Biblical stories contradict each other, so "inspired" does not necessarily mean "infallible."

8. God inspired each of the thoughts, but not necessarily each of the words, in the Bible.

9. Since the Bible is inspired by God, everything it says should be interpreted literally.

10. Inspiration guarantees God has told us everything we need to know about Himself and His plans.