

**BIBLE
STUDIES
FOR LIFE®**

Advanced

Bible Study

ADULTS
FALL 2025



THE GREATEST TRUTHS OF ALL TIME

HOW TO HANDLE LIFE'S INTERRUPTIONS

LEADING SOMEONE TO THE GREATEST DECISION OF ALL

One of the great joys of leading a group in Bible study is seeing group members deepen their walk with Christ. Everyone's walk with Christ begins with an initial decision to follow Him in repentance and faith. People may be in your group who have not made that decision yet. Take advantage of your time with them to talk about becoming a Christian.

As you tell your own story about coming to Christ, share these key truths:

1. We are all sinners, and each of us needs to acknowledge that truth before God. That acknowledgement involves repentance, which is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Refer to Romans 3:23, 6:23, and Acts 3:19.
2. The only way a person can receive the gift of forgiveness is by faith in Jesus as God's Son. Use verses like Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:8-9; and John 14:6 when talking about faith in Christ.
3. Confessing your faith in Jesus Christ means both believing in your heart and confessing with your mouth that He is Savior and Lord. Share Romans 10:9-10,13.

Invite the person to pray a prayer similar to this:

“Dear God, I know I am a sinner and have rebelled against You in many ways. I believe Jesus died for my sin and only through faith in His death and resurrection can I be forgiven. I now turn from my sin and ask Jesus to forgive me and to come into my life as my Savior and Lord. From this day forward, I will choose to follow Jesus. Thank You, Lord, for loving me and for forgiving me. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

A Special Note about “The Greatest Gift”

(Session 4 of “The Greatest Truths of All Time.”)

As your group studies and discusses this session, use it as an opportunity to lead unsaved group members and guests to faith in Christ. Use **“The Perfect Gift”** on the inside front cover of the Personal Study Guide to connect the session with each member's own need to place their hope and trust in Christ and receive His gift of salvation. The inside cover is a guide for understanding how Jesus provides the one thing we truly need.

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DON'T MISS THIS!

eBook

Bible Studies for Life is also available as an eBook. You can order a copy at lifeway.com/bsflebook.

EXTRA!

Every week, you'll find additional discussion questions and creative teaching ideas to help you tailor each session to the needs of your group. You'll also find links to magazine articles and the *Family Connection* page for parents.

www.BibleStudiesforLife.com/AdultExtra

Social Media

Connect with a community of *Bible Studies for Life* users. Post responses to questions, share teaching ideas, and link to great blog content. Facebook.com/BibleStudiesforLife

Podcast

Get free weekly insights for every session of *Bible Studies for Life: Adults* with our podcast. Each 20-minute episode will help you get the most out of your upcoming study. Listen at the gym, on the drive home, or wherever is best for you. Just search "Bible Studies for Life Adults" on your favorite podcast app to start listening today.

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HOW TO USE

What's Inside

TEACHING PLAN

Each session has a two-page teaching plan. Use it in accordance with *Advanced Bible Study*, utilizing the teaching outline to guide your class through the passage and its key emphases as detailed in the *Advanced Bible Study* commentary. Engage class members by leading a discussion of key points, asking questions, and inviting their insights. Occasionally you will see a QR code in this book. Use your phone to open that QR code to see bonus digital content.

OPTIONAL IDEA

We learn in a variety of ways. This additional teaching idea will encourage your class members to use different senses, enhancing their learning, and deepening their understanding.

DIG DEEPER

This is an illustration or fact not readily drawn from the passage that can add depth and meaning as you teach.

Pray

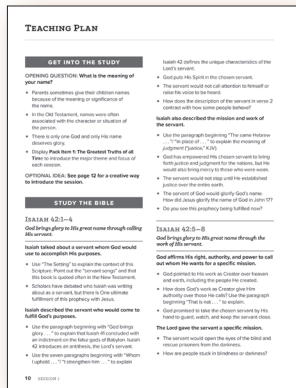
Because the Holy Spirit is the guide for your study, invite Him to show you how to “rightly divide the word of truth” as you teach your class. Read the Bible passage several times, asking the Holy Spirit to show you its meaning and application.

Prepare Your Class Members

Encourage your class members to read *Advanced Bible Study* prior to class time. In addition, you may consult one of the following Personal Study Guides:

- *Bible Studies for Life: Adult*
- *Bible Studies for Life: Senior Adult*
- *Bible Studies for Life: Daily Discipleship Guide*

Some participants may prefer to read their book after class as a way to follow up and reflect on what they have learned and discussed.



What Preschoolers Taught Me About Leading Adults

By Dwayne McCrary

One of the more desired rewards to earn in a preschool class is being the line leader. The first thing children will reveal to their parents at the end of the day is that they got to be the line leader that day. They won the prize by setting an example for the rest to follow. In most cases, the line leader is the one exhibiting the behavior desired by the teacher. In some cases, the child is selected by the teacher, who hopes the child will exhibit the desired behavior. Either way, the line leader sets the standard for that day.

When we accepted the role of leading an ongoing Bible study group, we became the line leader for that group. It is even possible that we too shared with our parents that we are a group leader! Let's think about how the line leader in a preschool class helps us understand our role as an adult group leader.

SETS THE EXAMPLE

As already stated, the line leader serves as an example for everyone else to follow. That is how he got to be the line leader in the first place. The other preschoolers know that the line leader represents the expectations for the rest of the class.

When we accepted the role of a group leader, we also accepted the responsibility of representing what it looks like to be a follower of Jesus. That willingness to follow Jesus should be one thing that qualifies us to be the group leader. Following matters.



As strange as this may seem, the title of leader is earned by a willingness to follow. The preschooler follows the expectations defined by their teacher, and adult group leaders follow the expectations defined by the Teacher. Following makes us capable of leading.

One of the roles we play as the group leader is maintaining a focus on reaching those far from God.

FOCUSES ON THE TASK

The preschool line leader focuses on the assigned task, which can include holding on to the rope, walking with purpose, and arriving at a specific destination. Holding the rope may be the biggest challenge for the line leader because children often let go of the rope as they make their way down a hall or through a group of other preschoolers.

Lots of distractions exist that can take the attention of an adult Bible study group as well. We can become focused on physical needs, world events, and class socials, and forget about some of the larger items. None of these are bad if they do not become the primary focus of the group.

One of the roles we play as the group leader is maintaining a focus on reaching those far from God. This focus includes challenging ourselves to be more intentional in praying for those far from God and making sure our group does the same. If we lose sight of the main thing, so will everyone else in our group.

BRINGS OTHERS ALONG

The preschool line leader brings others along for a walk. She encourages other classmates to grab the rope and join her in the journey. She also helps those who get disconnected and lose their grip to reconnect. She makes sure everyone arrives safely.

As adult Bible study group leaders, we get to encourage others to join our group, so they can discover some biblical truths together. We may be called upon to contact others struggling and in danger of becoming stragglers. We want to do our best to give everyone an opportunity to arrive safely.

Everyone arriving safely may mean we add a second “rope” and show others how to be a group leader. We then can make room for more people to grab part of the rope. Apprenticing others to become great line leaders may be more important than we realize. There really is no better way for another person to become a great line leader than learning from those already doing it.

We have the privilege of being line leaders for the Bible study group we lead. We can set an example, help the group remain focused, and bring others with us for the journey. We make our heavenly Father proud when we serve well as a line leader.

Dwayne McCrary is the manager of adult ongoing Bible studies at Lifeway.

INTRODUCTION

The Greatest Truths of All Time

G.O.A.T. is an acronym that has entered culture chiefly in the sports arena. Rather than animals with horns and beards, these G.O.A.T.s are those in their field who are considered the Greatest of All Time. People will always debate who deserves that title in various fields, but the Bible mentions several G.O.A.T.s about which there is no debate. This study looks at six of these as presented in Scripture. We begin with the one truly Greatest of All Time, God Himself, and consider five great truths that lead us to the greatest hope of all time.

How this study supports the Discipleship Plan (see page 65):

Engage with Scripture. The six great subjects in this study hit upon the central themes that run through all of Scripture.

- Session 1** The Greatest Name
(Isaiah 42:1–12)
- Session 2** The Greatest Need
(Luke 5:17–26)
- Session 3** The Greatest Sin
(Matthew 12:22–32)
- Session 4** The Greatest Gift
(Romans 5:6–11, 18–21)
- Session 5** The Greatest Command
(Mark 12:28–34)
- Session 6** The Greatest Return
(1 Thessalonians 4:16–5:8)

Writers

Pam Gibbs wrote the Teaching Plans and Optional Ideas for “The Greatest Truths of All Time.” Pam is a freelance writer and editor who lives in Tennessee with her husband and daughter (when she’s home from college). She is also a certified Spiritual Director and a volunteer at her church.

G.B. Howell, Jr. wrote the Dig Deeper features for “The Greatest Truths of All Time.” G.B. holds degrees from Carson-Newman University, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Oxford Graduate School. He has served as a pastor, adjunct professor, and content editor of *Biblical Illustrator* magazine.

Study Introduction



Here’s why this study is important.

THE GREATEST NAME

THE POINT

There is only one God and only His name deserves glory.

Isaiah 42:1–12 (CSB)

“This is my servant; I strengthen him, this is my chosen one; I delight in him. I have put my Spirit on him; he will bring justice to the nations.

² He will not cry out or shout or make his voice heard in the streets. ³ He will not break a bruised reed, and he will not put out a smoldering wick; he will faithfully bring justice. ⁴ He will not grow weak or be discouraged until he has established justice on earth. The coasts and islands will wait for his instruction.”

⁵ This is what God, the Lord, says— who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk on it— ⁶ “I am the Lord. I have called you for a righteous purpose, and I will hold you by your hand. I will watch over you, and I will appoint you to be a covenant for the people and a light to the nations, ⁷ in order to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon, and those sitting in darkness from the prison house. ⁸ I am the Lord. That is my name, and I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols. ⁹ The past events have indeed happened. Now I declare new events; I announce them to you before they occur.”

¹⁰ Sing a new song to the Lord; sing his praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea with all that fills it, you coasts and islands with your inhabitants. ¹¹ Let the desert and its cities shout, the settlements where Kedar dwells cry aloud. Let the inhabitants of Sela sing for joy; let them cry out from the mountaintops. ¹² Let them give glory to the Lord and declare his praise in the coasts and islands.

Isaiah 42:1–12 (KJV)

Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. ² He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. ³ A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. ⁴ He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

⁵ Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: ⁶ I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; ⁷ To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. ⁸ I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. ⁹ Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.

¹⁰ Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof. ¹¹ Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. ¹² Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands.

TEACHING PLAN

GET INTO THE STUDY

OPENING QUESTION: What is the meaning of your name?

- Parents sometimes give their children names because of the meaning or significance of the name.
- In the Old Testament, names were often associated with the character or situation of the person.
- There is only one God and only His name deserves glory.
- Display **Pack Item 1: The Greatest Truths of all Time** to introduce the major theme and focus of each session.

OPTIONAL IDEA: See page 12 for a creative way to introduce the session.

STUDY THE BIBLE

ISAIAH 42:1–4

God brings glory to His great name through calling His servant.

Isaiah talked about a servant whom God would use to accomplish His purposes.

- Use “The Setting” to explain the context of this Scripture. Point out the “servant songs” and that this book is quoted often in the New Testament.
- Scholars have debated who Isaiah was writing about as a servant, but there is One ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy with Jesus.

Isaiah described the servant who would come to fulfill God’s purposes.

- Use the paragraph beginning with “God brings glory . . .” to explain that Isaiah 41 concluded with an indictment on the false gods of Babylon. Isaiah 42 introduces an antithesis, the Lord’s servant.
- Use the seven paragraphs beginning with “Whom I uphold . . .”/ “I strengthen him . . .” to explain

Isaiah 42 defines the unique characteristics of the Lord’s servant.

- God puts His Spirit in the chosen servant.
- The servant would not call attention to himself or raise his voice to be heard.
- How does the description of the servant in verse 2 contrast with how some people behave?

Isaiah also described the mission and work of the servant.

- Use the paragraph beginning “The same Hebrew . . .”/ “In place of . . .” to explain the meaning of *judgment* (“justice,” KJV).
- God has empowered His chosen servant to bring forth justice and judgment for the nations, but He would also bring mercy to those who were weak.
- The servant would not stop until He established justice over the entire earth.
- The servant of God would glorify God’s name. How did Jesus glorify the name of God in John 17?
- Do you see this prophecy being fulfilled now?

ISAIAH 42:5–8

God brings glory to His great name through the work of His servant.

God affirms His right, authority, and power to call out whom He wants for a specific mission.

- God pointed to His work as Creator over heaven and earth, including the people He created.
- How does God’s work as Creator give Him authority over those He calls? Use the paragraph beginning “That is not . . .” to explain.
- God promised to take the chosen servant by His hand to guard, watch, and keep the servant close.

The Lord gave the servant a specific mission.

- The servant would open the eyes of the blind and rescue prisoners from the darkness.
- How are people stuck in blindness or darkness?

- Use the two paragraphs beginning “Verse 7 gives . . .” to explain verses 6–8 are linked through *covenant* and *name*. God’s servant would initiate covenant relationship.
- God will give His glory to no other because He alone is worthy of it.
- How might Acts 4:12 relate to this passage?

DIG DEEPER: Review and share the teaching idea on the next page to aid in your discussion of Isaiah and the characteristics of the Messiah.

ISAIAH 42:9–12

God deserves glory to His great name from all people.

God proclaimed that He was doing something new.

- Use the paragraph beginning “God deserves glory . . .”/ “God’s name deserves . . .” to explain *former things* refers to history and *new* means better.
- How has God made things new in your life?

Isaiah called the Israelites to praise God because of His mighty work.

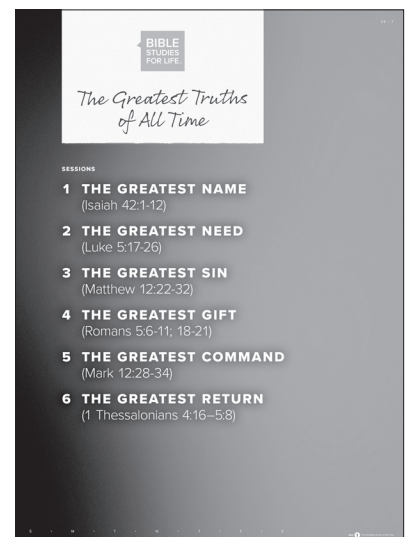
- Use the two paragraphs beginning “Verses 10–2 do . . .”/ “Verses 10–12 appear . . .” to explain these verses mirror worship from the Psalms and explain geographic terms.
- Isaiah instructed glory be given to God alone.
- How does Philippians 2:9–11 fulfill Isaiah’s call?

LIVE IT OUT

Concluding Question: How might believers give glory to God’s name?

- You can give God glory by worshipping Him.
- You can point others to God by sharing the good things He has done in your life.
- You can bring honor to God’s name by reflecting His character.

notes



Pack Item 1

OPTIONAL IDEA

Before members arrive, place names of famous people (both living and dead) on notecards. As members arrive, tape one of the names on the back of each member's back. Direct them not to tell each other anything about the names on their backs.

To begin class, instruct the class members to mingle in the room and ask each other yes or no questions to figure out whose name is on their own back. Members cannot ask the same person back-to-back questions (no pun intended). A great beginning question would be, "Is the person still living?"

Allow time for several members to guess their famous names before ending the game, at which time they can help each other remove the names from their backs so they see what name they were trying to identify.

Lead a discussion of:

- Which names are the easiest to guess?
- Which names were the most difficult?
- What other names might be synonymous with greatness, notoriety, or popularity?
- What makes a person famous?

Many times, a person's name is synonymous with the person's character, skills, or achievements. For example, Michael Jordan is known for his basketball prowess. Former president Richard Nixon is synonymous with the Watergate scandal. Culture often glorifies many of these public figures, who gain an idol-like status.

Today the session will begin a unit titled, "The Greatest Truths of All Time." Members will discuss the greatest name and why that name is worthy of glory.

DIG DEEPER

First-century Jews believed the Messiah could appear at any time. Living under the thumb of Roman domination, they prayed for a deliverer. They wanted the Messiah to reestablish the nation of Israel; they longed for the prestige and dominance Israel enjoyed during King David's reign.

John the Baptist, who was in prison, heard about Jesus's ministry. His actions didn't match Jewish expectations. Jesus showed no aggression toward the Romans. He wasn't gathering a band of soldiers. Was He the long-awaited Messiah or not? John sent his disciples to ask Jesus personally.

Rather than answering directly, Jesus told the men to report what He had been doing: "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor are told the good news" (Matt. 11:5).

Where did the list come from? Part of this list came from Isaiah.

Isaiah and a revered Jewish writing, *Redemption and Resurrection (Redemption)*, foretold what the Messiah would do. The writing was some of the *Dead Sea Scroll* text. According to Isaiah and the *Redemption* text, the Jews expected the Messiah would perform six ministries. He would:

- Open blind eyes (Isa. 35:5-6; 42:7; *Redemption*)
- Heal the crippled (Isa. 35:5-6)
- Heal various diseases (*Redemption*)
- Open deaf ears (Isa. 35:5-6)
- Raise the dead (*Redemption*)
- Tell the good news to the poor (Isa. 61:1-2).

In Jesus, God sent the Deliverer. To this day, there is no need to look for another.