

8-SESSION BIBLE STUDY FOR TEEN GIRLS

CAROLINE SAUNDERS



HOW TO KNOW THE GOSPEL
AND LIVE IT



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about the author

Caroline Saunders is a writer, pastor's wife, and mother of three who believes in taking Jesus seriously and being un-serious about nearly everything else. She is passionate about helping women and girls know, love, and enjoy God and His Word! Her Lifeway Girls study *Better Than Life: How to Study the Bible and Like It* is designed to help girls to know, love, and enjoy the Lord by equipping them to study the Bible—and her new study *Good News:*

How to Know the Gospel and Live It is designed to help girls react to the world with the marvelously good news of the gospel. Caroline loves to serve in her home, at her church, and through the parachurch women's ministry Story & Soul, and she is always accidentally cooking items that should not be cooked. (Spoons, usually. Pray for her.) Find her writing, resources, and ridiculousness at writercaroline.com and on Instagram @writercaroline.

Note from the Author



Dear sisters,

A few years ago, someone confronted me with a list of things that person believed I'd done wrong. A meticulous record of sins. About half of what this person said was completely untrue, a fourth of it only partially true, but that fourth that was true? Well, it was a gut punch. Deeply horrified, I felt sick to my stomach for a full day. As every cell seemed to twist in concern, I attempted to go about my regular life, but every few minutes, I had to stop and cry.

It is not easy to be confronted with your sins. In fact, I physically found it hard to breathe under the shame of it. To cope, I talked with my husband, my parents, a good friend—all people who know me and know Jesus. They were totally on my side, saying things like, "I can't believe that person said that!" and "It says way more about that person than it says about you," but these conversations only offered momentary reprieve. Honestly, I suspected this person saw something my loved ones couldn't—that there was a fraction of truth buried within those harsh words. I had caught a glimpse of myself, and it was devastating. The experience was like an emotional hurricane: I was mad at the confronter whose words made me feel betrayed and exposed, but I was also ashamed of myself and wanted to crawl into a hole. All of it felt like too much to bear.

Forty-eight hours later, as I was driving in my car, still wrestling with my sin, shame, and anger, the Holy Spirit flicked a gospel light switch in my head. It was as if Jesus himself whispered into my ear, "Caroline, my blood covers this list. You are free. You are safe."

In that moment, a different kind of tears came, and I started to laugh with relief and joy! Suddenly, I realized the solution wasn't to blame the person who confronted me, to point out the untruths, to rationalize my behavior, or to have dramatic conversations with anyone who would share in my anger and blame. The solution was the gospel.

I began to follow Jesus when I was eight years old, and the gospel was familiar to me. I knew it in a responsible, dutiful way, like a grocery list: eggs, milk, flour, sugar, butter. Jesus had forgiven my sins and saved me from eternal judgment in hell. But how had I missed that the gospel is good news not just for my eternal life, but for my everyday life? That day in the car was one of the first times I understood that the gospel is really good news—like the kind of good news that makes you jump up and down and throw confetti.

Slowly, I began to grasp the gospel beyond grocery list knowledge. The eggs, milk, flour, sugar, butter thing wasn't wrong—it just wasn't the full picture. I began to understand it the way I understand that eggs, milk, flour, and sugar can be combined in just such a way and baked at a certain temperature for a certain length of time, and the scent will fill the kitchen. How they become something new, and that thing can be placed on a platter, slathered with icing, and topped with sprinkles and a specific number of candles. How those candles can be illuminated and accompanied with a song, sung by people who love me, who want to bear witness to a milestone in my life.

In this study, I'll teach you the grocery list stuff, but I also want to point you to the birthday cake stuff. Yes, the gospel is a list of biblical truths, but it's also delicious and beautiful. It's being loved and cherished and considered and counted. It's belonging and home and safety. It's being sung over and delighted in. It's the terrible list being truly covered—thank you, Jesus! It's good news for your eternity and your every day—including this day.

That moment in the car, the gospel's goodness was gloriously specific to me: God had wholly seen me—every sin exactly as bad as it actually is, listed out in perfect detail. But rather than cruelly expose me, God covered it with the blood of Jesus so that the sin and shame wouldn't crush me, so that He could be with me. I could cry about this. (I know! So much crying!) God is not like anyone else.

If you've never cracked open a Bible or set foot in a church in your life, the gospel is good news for you, right this very moment. And for church girls like me—well, we make this big mistake in which we assume the gospel is a thing that saves us and then can set aside. Trust me, it is good news for you, too, right this very moment.

Spiritually speaking, things may seem very gray-scale to you right now—all black and white and list-like and humdrum and orderly. But knowing the gospel in a deeper way has the power to make everything full color. Let's allow the gospel to color the way we look at the world, like a great pair of glasses.

Get ready—there's good news ahead.

Your sister,

Caroline



how to use

Before you navigate the seven components of the gospel over our eight sessions together, I have three parts of this Bible study that I want to highlight:

GROUP TIME

My hope is that you won't attempt to do this study on your own. Invite your friends, mom, leader, or that girl who sits alone at the school lunch table to join you for this study of the gospel. The Group Time will be the intro for each week of personal study, so you want to always make sure you start here.

This section is full of questions and review to help your group go deep in discussion with one another. You will also want to watch the teaching videos (available for separate purchase) to help shape your view of each gospel element and hear how each offers really, really good news.

PERSONAL STUDY

Each session contains three days of Personal Study that you can complete anytime before your next Group Time. You will want to make sure you have a Bible and a pen ready, because there will be so many ways for you to interact and discover God's Word for yourself.

DISCOVERY

There's probably some part of your life right now where you'd really love some good news. At the end of each session, I'll invite you to practice wearing your gospel glasses by looking at your own life, considering where you're hungry for good news, and how the gospel offers it. The purpose of these pages is to help you take what you've learned from just pure head knowledge and ask God to transform it into real heart and life change. This will be so much fun and so purposeful, so don't skip it when you get to the end of each session!



The gospel is the good news story of

1 God rescuing a **2** sinful world by sending His Son Jesus to **3** live the perfect life no one could live, **4** die a punishing death sinners deserve, and **5** miraculously defeat death by coming back to life! Jesus returned to heaven but sent the **6** Holy Spirit to help everyone that would follow Him, and He promised to **7** return again to finally make everything wonderful forever.





SESSION 1



Group time

THIS STUDY IS ALL ABOUT GOOD NEWS!

What's some good news you got this week?

What's some bad news you got this week?

Is there any good news hidden inside the bad news?

INTRODUCTION

Here are three things to know about the gospel:

1. It means "good news."
2. The gospel is good news that grows, making more good news everywhere we look.¹
3. This good news isn't snobby and complicated. It isn't just for cool kids or smart people or talented people. It is simple, and it is for everyone. It's for you!

Oh, and one more thing: The gospel starts with God. In fact, everything starts with God. But who is God?

When we want to know someone, one of the first things ask is, "What's your name?" So, let's start with God's name.

♥ You may know already that God has lots of names. Can you list a few names of God?

♥ Read Isaiah 9:6 and Isaiah 44:6 in your Bible. Write down every name of God that you see in these two verses.

♥ Though God has lots of names, He has one name that is His personal name. What is the name that your close friends and family call you?

WATCH

As you watch the Session 1 video with your group, fill in the blanks below.

The Hebrew word for God seen throughout Genesis is _____.

Elohim likes to use _____ to accomplish His good ideas, but he doesn't _____ that they do it alone. He promises to be _____ them.

In your Bible, anytime you see the word _____ written in all caps, this is an indication of the divine name: _____.

Here's a weird word to help you remember what God's name means:

L — _____

U — _____

C — _____

P — _____

S — _____

It's not just His _____—it's what He's _____.

EXAMINATION

As we learned today, God's personal name is Yahweh.² We can find it in our Bibles when we see the word "LORD" written in all caps. This name is constructed from the Hebrew phrase "I Am Who I Am." We could talk about what it means for hours, but for now, remember the four things we learned with this totally made-up word: **LUPS**.

1. **Limitless:** Yahweh has no limits of time, space, or knowledge. For all time, "I AM."
2. **Unchanging:** Yahweh doesn't change. No matter what, "I AM."
3. **Present:** Yahweh is present everywhere. Wherever we go, "I AM."
4. **Self-existent:** Yahweh isn't influenced or made to be who He is. He simply is "I AM."

♥ **Read Exodus 33:11-23 below. This is just before Yahweh passes before Moses and proclaims His name. As you read, circle every mention of the divine name.**

¹¹ The LORD would speak with Moses face to face, just as a man speaks with his friend, then Moses would return to the camp. His assistant, the young man Joshua son of Nun, would not leave the inside of the tent. ¹² Moses said to the LORD, "Look, you have told me, 'Lead this people up,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favor with me.' ¹³ Now if I have indeed found favor with you, please teach me your ways, and I will know you, so that I may find favor with you. Now consider that this nation is your people." ¹⁴ And he replied, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." ¹⁵ "If your presence does not go," Moses responded to him, "don't make us go up from here. ¹⁶ How will it be known that I and your people have found favor with you unless you go with us? I and your people will be distinguished by this from all the other people on the face of the earth." ¹⁷ The LORD answered Moses, "I will do this very thing you have asked, for you have found favor with me, and I know you by name." ¹⁸ Then Moses said, "Please, let me see your glory." ¹⁹ He said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim

the name 'the LORD' before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”²⁰ But he added, “You cannot see my face, for humans cannot see me and live.”²¹ The LORD said, “Here is a place near me. You are to stand on the rock,²² and when my glory passes by, I will put you in the crevice of the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by.²³ Then I will take my hand away, and you will see my back, but my face will not be seen.”

- ♥ **Verses 12 and 17 tell us Yahweh knows Moses by name. Underline this info in the passage. But Moses never said, “Hi! My name is Moses.” Why do you think Yahweh knows Moses’s name?**

Knowing everything is Yahweh’s thing. Of course He knows Moses’s name! In your Bible, look up Psalm 139. This psalm is written by King David and starts with “Yahweh.”

- ♥ **List some of the things David says Yahweh knows about him. (Hint: Look at verses 1-4,16.):**

- ♥ **Skip back to look at the Exodus 33 passage again.**

1. **In verse 13, what does Moses ask Yahweh to do?**
2. **How does Yahweh respond (v. 14)?**
3. **In verse 18, what does Moses ask Yahweh to do?**



Glory means greatness, splendor. It implies a heaviness.³ Imagine lifting a soaking wet towel that's fallen into a pool. It feels weighty because it's saturated with water. The idea of glory is like that—something soaked with wonderfulness. In essence, Moses is saying, "Show me every ounce of how amazing you are! Show me everything wonderful about you!"

♥ **In response to this request, God says He will do four things. Go back to the text and number each one. (Hint: See verse 19.)**

This list shows us some of the things that make God absolutely soaked with wonderfulness!

♥ **Look up Exodus 34:5-9. This is where Yahweh proclaims His name to Moses. List some of the things this tells you about Yahweh:**

♥ **In the teaching video, we added a C for *character* to the front of our weird word, making it "CLUPS." How does God's character enhance your understanding of the LUPS traits?**

APPLICATION

There isn't enough paper in the world to list all of things that make Yahweh wonderful. The list becomes more wonderful when we realize that Yahweh brings all His wonderfulness near to people. Look how God responds to Moses in his moments of fear:

♥ **Back in Exodus 3, when Moses first met God and God asked him to be his tool to rescue the people, God responded to Moses's fear like this: "I will certainly be _____ you" (v. 12).**

♥ In Exodus 33, Moses is leading those he rescued, and he seems overwhelmed. God offers these words to Moses in verse 14: "My presence will go _____ you."

In both of these situations, Moses has two big questions on his heart:

1. He wants to know the same thing we asked at the beginning: "Who is God?"
2. He also wants to know: "Are You coming with me?"

These two questions are buried within the heart of every human. When they pop up in your heart, how might you answer them, especially now that you have learned more about Yahweh?

♥ Practice answering below, so you can reference this page when your heart begins to wonder:

1. Who is God?

2. Is He with me?

PRAY

Close in prayer, praising God for the good news of the gospel and asking Him to help you and your group to grasp it in a deeper way.



PERSONAL STUDY 1

Good News for When You Want Control and for When Things Feel Out of Control

Sometimes I think a life remote control would be amazing. Wouldn't it be great to mute someone annoying, fast-forward a boring class, or rewind back to a fun weekend?

Even more: Wouldn't it be nice to be able to "change the channel" when something horrible happens? Or to pause and savor wonderful moments?

The desire for control makes sense—We long to be safe from the unexpected.

♥ **What is something you are trying to control in your life?**

♥ **What is something that feels out of control right now?**

♥ **What is something you know you can't control, and it feels helpless?**

Let's look for good news for the girl who wants control and the girl who feels like everything is out of control.

♥ **Open your Bibles to Psalm 121.**

We don't know who wrote this psalm, but it's called a "Song of Ascents," which means it was likely designed for God's people to sing or recite as they traveled to Jerusalem for one of the important feasts.⁴ Along their journey, they were able to remember important truths about Yahweh.

♥ **As you read, circle every reference to the divine name (Yahweh = LORD). Keep in mind what we learned about His name (CLUPS).**

♥ **Where does help come from (vv. 1-2)?**

♥ Who is awake when God's people are still asleep (and are unable to control anything) (vv. 3-4)?

♥ Who protects God's people (vv. 5-8.)?

This passage may bring difficult questions to the Christian's mind: *What about those times when I was obviously unsafe? When my foot slipped? When I was harmed?*

♥ What other difficult questions come to mind? (By the way, it's okay to wrestle with such questions. They are not too big for Yahweh!)

When a dancer turns, she must fix her gaze on an unmoving spot in order to stay steady while she spins. This concept is just as true for the Christian. So, let me show you your "spot":

♥ Read Exodus 34:5-8 and make a list of every quality of Yahweh's. As you make your list, remember Yahweh's name is built around the phrase "I Am Who I Am." That means in the past, present, and future, Yahweh stays how He is.

Sister, do things feel as if they're swirling out of control? Hear this good news: *what is chaos to you is not chaos to Yahweh.*

He is Yahweh. Everything is within His control, and you can trust Him because He is good. He always has been in control and good, He always will be in control and good, and He is, this moment, in control and good.

♥ Insert whatever problem is bothering you:

_____ is within God's control.

Does this truth mean all the questions melt away? No, but it means when the world spins, we have something steady and unchanging to look to.

And that's good news.

PERSONAL STUDY 2

Good News for When Your Past Is Broken and Your Future Is Uncertain

Sometimes terrible things in our past and unknown things in our future make us feel overwhelmed and unseen, like a blade of grass caught up in the whirl of a tornado. Where is the good news for the girl with the broken past? For the girl with the uncertain future?

The good news is that there is a God who loves and leads her without being bound by time. Consider what we've learned about the name Yahweh. It's built on that Hebrew phrase, "I Am Who I Am," and means in the past, present, and future, God is. God exists in those places that escape your grasp in the present moment, and in those places, He is Who He always is!

♥ Read Psalm 139 in your Bible.

1. What name does David use in verse 1?
2. Read verses 7-10. Wherever David goes, where is Yahweh?
3. Is there anywhere David can go that Yahweh is not?
4. Read verses 13-16a. Who formed David's inward parts?
5. Who knitted him together in his mother's womb?
6. What was not hidden from God?
7. In other words, before David was born, what did Yahweh see and what was He doing?
8. Read verse 16b. Before David was born, what did Yahweh have written down?
9. Consider verses 13-16. Is there any "when" David can go that Yahweh is not?

There is no **where** and no **when** David can go that God is not. We call this omnipresence—Yahweh is present everywhere!

This song (*psalm* means song!) was written by David to God, but it was given to the choirmaster for all of God’s people to use in worship. (Notice the tiny superscription at the top of the psalm.) This means you can sing this song to God, too. So let’s apply God’s Word to your specific situation.

♥ **Who formed your inward parts?**

♥ **Who knit you together in your mother’s womb?**

♥ **What was Yahweh seeing and doing before you were ever born?**

♥ **Before you were born, what did Yahweh have written down?**

♥ **Is there anywhere you can go that God is not?**

Sometimes we believe in God’s **omnipresence**, but we don’t believe in God’s goodness. This is especially tempting when we don’t understand what God was doing in our past or what God is planning for our future.

♥ **Read the verses below and circle anything that has to do with the word “good”:**

*He said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you,
and I will proclaim the name ‘the LORD’ before you.”*

Exodus 33:19

*We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God,
who are called according to his purpose.*

ROMANS 8:28

♥ **In the first verse, Exodus 33:19, what connection do you see between God’s name and God’s goodness?**

♥ Rewrite the second verse, Romans 8:28, in your own words.

To put it simply: God is good, and God works with goodness. Though our stories can feel random or cruel, God never operates with randomness or cruelty. Rather, He carefully weaves our stories for ultimate, eternal good in ways only a limitless, good God can! We may not get it today, but one day we will.

♥ In Psalm 139, David was praising God, but that doesn't mean he understood what God was doing. Read verse 6 and write it below:

When you don't understand what God is doing, you can say that, too: "This wondrous knowledge is beyond me. It is lofty; I am unable to reach it." It's normal to feel small, confused, and limited—but you get to trust in a limitless good.

Finally, take another look at verse 17. These verses are words of praise David offers to the One who saw him in every past moment and who holds every future day in His hands.

♥ Write them down in the space below as a song of praise to Yahweh:

♥ What is the good news for the girl whose past or present overwhelms her?

PERSONAL STUDY 3

Good News for When Nothing Makes Sense and Everything Is a Mess

Earlier this week, we read about when God told Moses about Himself by causing all of His goodness to pass in front of Moses and proclaiming His name.

♥ **What are some things God told Moses about Himself (Ex. 34:5-7)?**

♥ **Do you remember Moses's response (Ex. 34:8)? Write it below.**

There's an important takeaway here: Who God is, is always good news. And who God is, is who He always is. Are you tracking with me?

Here's another way to say it: God is the same good-news God when nothing makes sense and everything is a mess. We can see this really clearly in the book of Job.

Job is one of the oldest books in the Bible, and it describes the account of a man whose world has come crashing down.

♥ **Read Job 1:13-19 and 2:7 and record some of the tragedies Job endured:**

A large portion of the book features Job's friends, who are trying to encourage Him and make sense of everything, and honestly, they aren't much help. But finally, God Himself speaks, and everything changes.

Why? Because who God is, is always good news. It's news that breathes life into the deadliest of places and offers stability to the shakiest of places—even for someone like Job, who knows God really well already and whose world has totally fallen apart.

♥ **In Job 38, God offers a series of rhetorical questions that show how gloriously big He is—and how gloriously small Job is in comparison. Read it in your own Bible and note a few verses that make you say, “Whoa.”**

God continues sharing about Himself for two more chapters, and Job is stunned.

♥ **Read his response in Job 42:1-6:**

*¹ Then Job replied to the LORD:
² I know that you can do anything
and no plan of yours can be thwarted.
³ You asked, “Who is this who conceals my counsel with ignorance?”
Surely I spoke about things I did not understand,
things too wondrous for me to know.
⁴ You said, “Listen now, and I will speak.
When I question you, you will inform me.”
⁵ I had heard reports about you,
but now my eyes have seen you.
⁶ Therefore, I reject my words and am sorry for them;
I am dust and ashes.*

♥ **Circle that phrase “too wondrous” in verse 3. Does it ring a bell? Read David’s words in Psalm 139:6 below and circle the similar wording:**

*This wondrous knowledge is beyond me.
It is lofty; I am unable to reach it.*

When Job, David, and Moses have a better glimpse of who God is, they are no longer overwhelmed by all they don't know. Instead, they worship the God who knows everything.

This is good news for us, too: God knows everything. We don't have to try to know everything or fight to hold life's remote control. Instead, we can remember who God is and we can willingly entrust ourselves to His care. In the unknown, we can trade anxiety for awe, responding like David and Job by saying, "God, I don't know what's going on! What you're doing is too wonderful for me" and by remembering who God is. He is Yahweh!

♥ **What is something you wish you knew right now?**

Now take that thing you don't know and view it again in light of who God is. He knows it. He knows you. He knows everything.

Discovery

GOOD NEWS FOR WHEN YOU _____

In our group session, we talked about Exodus 33 and how Moses has two big questions he is asking God:

1. "Who are You?"
2. "Are You coming with me?"

Right now, there is probably something happening in your life where your heart is crying out those two questions.

♥ Describe one area of your life where you are hungry for good news:

♥ Take a few minutes and flip through this week's study pages. (You might highlight your favorite parts so you can easily reference them later, when it's harder to remember who God is.)

Our main takeaway is that who God is, is always good news. But sometimes, we need to take a moment to pause and consider how who God is, is good news right here and right now. Based on all we've learned about Yahweh this week, what good news can you offer yourself for that place of struggle in your life?

Let's close with two gospel verses from Romans 10. Read them over carefully so you don't overlook their good news:

**For everyone who calls on the name
of the Lord will be saved.**

ROMANS 10:13

**If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord,"
and believe in your heart that God raised
him from the dead, you will be saved.**

ROMANS 10:9

We spend most of our time in this study talking about how the gospel is good news for our **everyday specifics**. But the gospel is also good news for our **eternal salvation**. Remember, anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved—from their sins, from death, to a family, forever. When we repent of our sins, we are no longer enemies but His beloved children. When we confess our sins and call upon the Lord to be our Savior, we are forgiven and fathered forever.

Is this something you sense the Holy Spirit is stirring in you to do? Do you desire to put yourself under God's loving leadership forever? If so, ask Him to save you! Then, tell someone who loves Jesus: "I am a Christian now!" so they can celebrate with you.