

Bridging the Origins Divide

Study Guide (Reader Bonus Pack)

A 5-session guide for solo readers, small groups, and leaders. Includes reflection questions, discussion prompts, and leader notes.

Paul Myrant

Author of *Bridging the Origins Divide: How We Got Here (and Why It Matters)*

Welcome

Thank you for working through this Reading Guide. My purpose in writing *Bridging the Origins Divide* is simple: **unity where there's division, clarity where there's confusion, and light where there's darkness.** The goal of this guide is to help readers think clearly about the foundations of their worldview: **Is there a Creator? What is the Creator like? And what does that mean for how we understand origins, meaning, and biblical authority?** This guide is designed to help you read thoughtfully, discuss respectfully, and stay grounded—without slogans, panic, or pressure. My prayer is that it brings clarity, strengthens faith where it is present, and invites honest reflection where questions remain.

— Paul Myrant

How to Use This Guide

Solo Reader (20–25 minutes per session)

1. Read the assigned chapters
2. Review the Key Ideas and Key Terms
3. Answer the Reflection Questions
4. Choose one Next Step
5. Optional prayer prompt

Small Group (45–60 minutes per session)

- 5 min: opening prayer + purpose
- 10 min: recap key ideas
- 25 min: discussion questions
- 10 min: agree/disagree + next steps
- 5 min: closing prayer

Leaders/Pastors (prep)

- skim the leader notes first
 - pick 2–3 questions (don't try to cover everything)
 - keep the tone: respectful, thoughtful, Scripture-first
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SESSION 1 — The Big Questions: Origins and Why It Matters

Chapters: 1 + 3

Big Idea (1 sentence)

Before we argue about details, we must ask the foundational questions: **where did everything come from, and why does it matter?**

Key Ideas (3)

- Origins is not just a science debate—it's a worldview debate.
- Your answer shapes meaning, purpose, and how you live.
- “Why it matters” is as important as “how it happened.”

Key Terms

Worldview, meaning, purpose, ultimate cause

Reflection Questions (3)

1. What do you think the origins debate is *really* about underneath the surface?
2. How does your view of origins affect the way you think about purpose and meaning?
3. What is one assumption you bring into this topic that you should name openly?

Agree/Disagree

“The origins question is mainly about meaning and worldview, not just scientific mechanisms.”

Next Step

- Write a one-paragraph answer: “Why does my life matter?” (even if you’re unsure).
- Identify one place you rely on slogans instead of careful thinking, and replace it with a real question.

Prayer Prompt

“Lord, give me honesty, clarity, and humility as I think about these foundations.”

SESSION 1 — Leader Notes + Extra Questions

Leader Notes

Purpose: set a calm tone and define the goal—clarity and honest reasoning, not debate wins.
Watch-outs: avoid “science is evil” or “faith is blind.” Keep it thoughtful.

Extra Questions (pick 2–4)

1. Why do people get heated about origins so quickly?
 2. What do you think people are protecting—identity, community, certainty?
 3. What would a respectful conversation about origins look like?
 4. What would be “progress” after Session 1 (clarity, not agreement)?
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SESSION 2 — The Case for a Creator

Chapters: 2

Big Idea

The most basic question is not “how did it happen?” but **why anything exists at all**—and whether belief in a Creator is rational.

Key Ideas

- This chapter presents arguments for God’s existence (philosophical reasoning).
- The goal is clarity about ultimate cause, not emotional persuasion.
- The Creator question becomes the foundation for every downstream question.

Key Terms

Creator, causation, contingency, ultimate cause

Reflection Questions

1. Which argument in this chapter do you find most compelling—and why?
2. Which argument do you find least compelling—and why?
3. If a Creator exists, what follows logically about meaning and responsibility?

Agree/Disagree

“Belief in a Creator can be rational, not merely emotional or cultural.”

Next Step

- Write your “respectful skeptic question” in one sentence (example: “Where did matter come from?”).
- Practice explaining one argument from this chapter in 60 seconds, without jargon.

Prayer Prompt

“Lord, help me love truth and think clearly—without fear.”

SESSION 2 — Leader Notes + Extra Questions

Leader Notes

Purpose: keep it simple. Don’t try to teach a philosophy class. Aim for: “Can we reason about ultimate cause?”

Watch-outs: avoid mocking skeptics. Assume good faith.

Extra Questions

1. Why do you think people avoid the “ultimate cause” question?
 2. What would it mean for your life if God exists and is personal?
 3. How do you keep reasoning respectful when disagreement is strong?
 4. What is the difference between “proof” and “a rational conclusion”?
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SESSION 3 — Faith Versus Science: Clearing Category Confusion

Chapters: 4

Big Idea

Many conflicts exist because people ask science to answer questions it was never designed to answer—and ignore the philosophical layer underneath.

Key Ideas

- Science describes processes; philosophy addresses ultimate causes and meaning.
- “Faith vs science” often becomes a false dichotomy.
- Category clarity lowers emotional heat and raises understanding.

Key Terms

Science, philosophy, metaphysics, naturalism (as a starting assumption)

Reflection Questions

1. Where have you seen people confuse categories (science vs meaning vs morality)?
2. What assumptions do you think are operating under the hood in most origins debates?
3. What does a “both/and” approach look like: valuing science while addressing deeper questions?

Agree/Disagree

“Science is powerful, but it cannot answer every question that matters most.”

Next Step

- Replace one slogan you've heard with a better question (e.g., “What assumptions are we starting with?”).

Prayer Prompt

“Lord, give me wisdom to ask the right questions in the right way.”

SESSION 3 — Leader Notes + Extra Questions

Leader Notes

Purpose: reduce heat. Raise clarity.

Watch-outs: don't insult science; don't insult faith. Keep it balanced.

Extra Questions

1. What does “anti-supernaturalism” look like as a starting assumption?
 2. How do starting assumptions shape conclusions?
 3. What's the cost of getting this wrong (personally, culturally, spiritually)?
 4. How do you talk to a student or family member without becoming combative?
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SESSION 4 — The Nature of the Creator + Theodicy

Chapters: 5–7

Big Idea

The question isn't only “does God exist?” but “**what is God like**—and what do we do with suffering and unanswered prayer?”

Key Ideas

- If God exists, His nature matters: goodness, justice, personal concern.
- Theodicy asks: why does God allow suffering / not answer prayer?
- These questions shape trust, worship, and moral reasoning.

Key Terms

Nature of God, goodness, justice, theodicy

Reflection Questions

1. Which is harder for you: believing God exists, or believing God is good?
2. What's a mature way to think about suffering without using clichés?
3. How does God's justice change how you think about right/wrong and responsibility?

Agree/Disagree

“If God exists and cares, then justice and moral accountability are real.”

Next Step

- Write one honest paragraph: “What do I do with unanswered prayer?”
- Choose one attribute of God (goodness, justice, wisdom) and reflect on how it affects your daily life.

Prayer Prompt

“Lord, help me think honestly, and trust wisely, even where I don't have easy answers.”

SESSION 4 — Leader Notes + Extra Questions

Leader Notes

Purpose: keep this pastoral. Some people will have real pain.
Watch-outs: don't minimize suffering. Don't rush to “solutions.”

Extra Questions

1. Why do people assume suffering disproves God?
 2. What's the difference between "God can" and "God always will"?
 3. How do we talk about judgment/justice without losing compassion?
 4. What does it mean to seek truth without becoming harsh?
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SESSION 5 — Genesis + Implications: Creation, Young Earth, and Dating

Chapters: 8–11

Big Idea

Origins debates often come down to biblical authority and interpretive assumptions—then to questions about creation models, age of the earth, and evidence.

Key Ideas

- Genesis interpretation influences authority and worldview.
- Paul argues young-earth implications matter for how people view Scripture.
- Topics like geology and radiometric dating require careful thought and humility.

Key Terms

Genesis, biblical authority, young earth, radiometric dating, assumptions

Reflection Questions

1. What do you believe is "at stake" in how people interpret Genesis?
2. What assumptions do people bring into age-of-earth debates?
3. How do you hold convictions strongly without becoming reactionary?

Agree/Disagree

"Interpretation is shaped by assumptions; clarity about assumptions improves the conversation."

Next Step

- Write your position in 3 lines: what you think, why you think it, and what evidence you'd be willing to reconsider.

Prayer Prompt

“Lord, give me humility and courage to follow truth wherever it leads.”

SESSION 5 — Leader Notes + Extra Questions

Leader Notes

Purpose: don't let this become a shouting match. Focus on the book's aim: foundations + assumptions + authority.

Watch-outs: avoid calling others dishonest; keep the posture invitational.

Extra Questions

1. What does “biblical authority” mean in practice—not just theory?
 2. How can someone disagree with you and still be sincere?
 3. What would a fair-minded conversation look like with a science-minded skeptic?
 4. What is the best “next step” for someone who wants to study more?
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Leader Appendix — How to Facilitate This Study Well

Group Agreements (read in Session 1)

1. We pursue clarity, not victory.
2. We assume good faith.
3. We define terms before debating.
4. We don't weaponize labels.
5. We stay respectful, especially on hard topics.

Redirect scripts (use these)

- “Let’s pause and define terms before we conclude.”
- “What text or assumption is that based on?”
- “Let’s steelman the other view before critiquing it.”
- “We’re not here to mock anyone—let’s reason carefully.”

When to pause

Pause if voices rise, sarcasm appears, or pain gets minimized. Reset with prayer and a clarifying question.

Closing Note

Thank you for working through this guide. My prayer is that it helped you think more clearly, ask better questions, and consider the foundations of your worldview with humility and courage. Whether you agree, disagree, or are still processing, the goal is the same: pursue truth honestly and live wisely in light of it. If this book helped you, an honest Amazon review is one of the best ways to help others find it.

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Author, *Bridging the Origins Divide*

“What’s Next”

1) Continue the conversation

If you’re reading with a group, consider revisiting the five sessions over time. These questions are foundational and worth thinking through carefully.

2) Audiobook (coming soon)

The audiobook edition of *Bridging the Origins Divide* is coming soon. If you joined the email list to download this guide, you’ll be notified when it releases.

3) Future resources

Additional teaching resources and opportunities to go deeper may be released over time.

4) Consider leaving an honest Amazon review

If the book helped you, an honest review is one of the best ways to help others find it and decide if it’s for them.