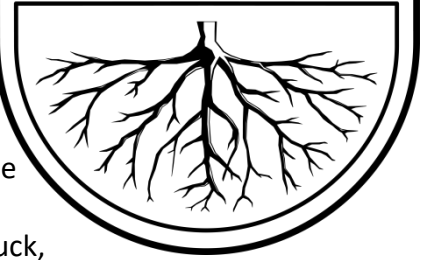




CONTEXT AND CLARIFICATION

Genesis 1:1

LIFE GROUPS



2. Eternity is an inherently mind-boggling concept, especially eternity past. Our mind falters when we try to think of something before anything existed. Yet the Bible clearly says that God is the eternal, preexistent One. He had no beginning and will have no end. The goal of this question is to get people talking about these concepts. Keep in mind that because we cannot fully comprehend this topic, we cannot justly discuss it either. Lean on the articles we have provided if you get stuck, and always point the discussion back to God's word, but don't get discouraged if this question is met primarily by confusion. That's kind of the point.

3. This is a rather long passage. If it is helpful, you could have everyone participate in the reading and go around the room verse by verse until you reach the end. Immediately after reading Job 38 it should be evident that pride is unacceptable, yet there is something about the human heart that just yearns to be praised. This question is to go along with Jeremiah's sermon point that "From Beginning to End this story, creation, this world, this reality that we live in is about one person and one person only! And that person is not you, and it is definitely not me!" May God be gracious and enable us to realize that truth through this question.

4. If we ought to be humble, then it is a good idea for us to know what humility looks like practically. We have provided some resources to help here, but I also wanted to provide some more insights from C.S. Lewis. In *Mere Christianity*, Lewis gives the following insight:

"Do not imagine that if you meet a really humble man he will be what most people call 'humble' nowadays: he will not be a sort of greasy, smarmy person, who is always telling you that, of course, he is a nobody. Probably all you will think about him is that he seemed a cheerful, intelligent chap who took a real interest in what *you* said to *him*....He will not be thinking about humility: he will not be thinking about himself at all. If anyone would like to acquire humility, I can, I think, tell him the first step. The first step is to realize that one is proud."

This theme is caught up by David Mathis in the *Desiring God* article we sent. He says that "Humility is not fundamentally a human initiative, but a proper, God-given response in us to God himself and his glory and purposes." Therefore, we must be careful to make the distinction in our groups that humility is most definitely *not* self-deprecation or self-pity, because both are still self-focused postures of the human heart, and therefore nothing more than poorly disguised pride. If we want to follow the Biblical command to be humble, we must look first to the splendor of God.

5. God's sovereignty is incredibly comforting if we find our security in him and the truth of his word. If, on the other hand, we find our security in our own might and control we can have negative, even visceral, reactions to the news that God is ultimately in control. This question provides space for the group to wrestle with that, as well as an application question to help us live the truth in a practical sense. Mathis provides some ideas here, including study of God's Word, obedience to His commands prayer, fasting, and others.

6. Even if our proud hearts naturally resist God's control, we want to discipline our hearts to submit to him. This question provides space for the group to care for one another by involving each other in their discipleship journey.



LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS

ICE BREAKER: What is the earliest thing you can remember from your childhood?

1. Read Genesis 1:1. What was your biggest takeaway from Sunday's sermon?
2. What is the oldest thing you have seen (tree, building, etc.)? What kinds of thoughts go through your mind when trying to comprehend God's eternity?
3. Read Job 38 as a group. How do you tend to make God's story about you?
4. What do you think true humility looks like? How have you seen it displayed in other Christians?
5. Read Psalm 139 and Romans 11:33-36. How does the thought that you are a part of God's plan tend to make you feel (e.g. uneasy, angry, relieved, etc.)? What is one thing you can do to acknowledge and submit to him this week?
6. What are some things that make you anxious or that you feel you need to control? How can we be praying for you as you seek to trust God's perfect timing in those situations?



FURTHER STUDY

Acts 17:22-29

So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we are indeed his offspring.' Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man."

1 Peter 5:5-11

Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Isaiah 40:18-26

To whom then will you liken God,
or what likeness compare with him?

19 An idol! A craftsman casts it,
and a goldsmith overlays it with gold
and casts for it silver chains.

20 He who is too impoverished for an offering
chooses wood that will not rot;
he seeks out a skillful craftsman
to set up an idol that will not move.

21 Do you not know? Do you not hear?
Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?

22 It is he who sits above the circle of the earth,
and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;
who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,
and spreads them like a tent to dwell in;

23 who brings princes to nothing,
and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness.

24 Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,
scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,
when he blows on them, and they wither,
and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

25 To whom then will you compare me,
that I should be like him? says the Holy One.

26 Lift up your eyes on high and see:
who created these?
He who brings out their host by number,
calling them all by name;
by the greatness of his might
and because he is strong in power,
not one is missing.

“The point of the verse (Gen 1:1), then, is that God is absolutely sovereign over all matter. Such sovereignty demands allegiance, for to acknowledge the Creator naturally leads to submission to him.”

- Allen P. Ross

“This section and indeed the entire book of Genesis is about God from first to last—and to read it any other way is to misread it.”



- R. K. Hughes

“According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil, is Pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere fleabites in comparison: it was through Pride that the devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind.

...Pride always means enmity—it is enmity. And not only enmity between man and man, but enmity to God. In God you come up against something which is in every respect immeasurably superior to yourself. Unless you know God as that—and therefore yourself as nothing in comparison—you do not know God at all. As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people: and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you.”

- C. S. Lewis

“Lying at the heart of all sin is the desire to be the center, to be like God.”

- D. A. Carson

“The real test of being in the presence of God is, that you either forget yourself altogether or see yourself as a small, dirty object. It is better to forget about yourself altogether.”

- C. S. Lewis