

Who am I God?

Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview

Course Presentation: Course presentation will be team lecture with a high degree of interaction, either voluntary or elicited (Any doubts about what THAT means?).

Notes: Lecture notes that include all Scripture used will be passed out at the beginning of each session for your use in note taking and ultimate retention. This handout will be an outline of what we intend to cover during that class. This is a useful tool because we are teaching, not preaching, and we can all learn together. There will also be a variety of other handouts and even some homework on occasion.

Bibliography: A Bibliography of sources we have used as well as books we feel you might find helpful will be available later in the course.

Supplemental Contact: Because of time restraints and the amount of material we want to cover, it will be difficult to address personal issues and give each one the attention it deserves. In addition, we want to be very respectful and sensitive to the fact that some personal issues may be too painful or specific to share in this class setting. If you feel you have such a confidential issue or that you need more personal help than our class can offer, we will be available in the classroom before class each Sunday night from 6:00 - 6:30 p.m.

Introduction of instructors.

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Name Cards. If you have not already done so, please take one of these cards, fold it in half and write your name on it. When I get really involved in what I'm doing, I tend to forget people's names (if I ever knew them in the first place). Isn't that right, (forget name)? And everyone here may not know everyone else, so keep these cards in front of you, ok? Give them to us at the end of each class and pick them up at the beginning of the next class.

Statement of Purpose. The purpose of this class is to objectively examine ourselves and our relationships so we can know ourselves better, accept what we cannot change about ourselves and our relationships, change what we can, and be vessels [“meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work.”](#) II Timothy 2:21

[I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search: Psalm 77:6](#)

[Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: Psalm 139:23](#)

Ice Breaker. Divide class into even groups. Each individual is to find out at least one thing they didn't already know about everyone in his group and share one fact about himself.

Overview of class. Course presentation will be team lecture with a high degree of interaction, either voluntary or elicited. In the absence of volunteers, we WILL take prisoners.

Instruct class to change watch or ring to opposite hand.

Teachers' goals and expectations (aka The Who, What, Where, When, Why).

At the end of these sessions/chapters you will have a better understanding of:

Who you are in your relationships with yourself, with your God, and with others in your life.

What strengths and areas for growth you have,

Where you fit into God's plan,

When to seek change and when to accept your circumstances and allow God to shape your life, and

Why heartaches come into our lives.

Student expectations and what they hope to get out of the class.

Discuss.

What will be covered and how classes will be conducted. In this nine week course, we will help you to examine the question: Who am I God? We will start with God because if you are a success in everything else and leave God out of the equation, you will fail. We will encourage you to look at yourself next and try to identify your strengths and weaknesses. Then we will encourage you to look at yourself and who you are in your relationships. Topic titles and brief summaries for each topic are as follows:

Part 1: Who Am I, God? Introduction and Overview. Who are you and why do you do the things you do? You are an individual first, then perhaps a spouse, a parent, a sister/brother, son/daughter, friend, co-worker, church member. How can you be all you can be for God and in your relationships?

Part 2: You and Your God. "In the beginning, God..." [Genesis 1:1a](#) God and our relationship with Him must be the foundation if we are going to have peace with ourselves and be able to have healthy, growing relationships with others. Your horizontal relationships (you and other people) cannot possibly be the best they can be if your vertical relationship (you and God) is not what it should be.

Part 3: Who Am I? It All Starts With You. The Greek philosopher Socrates said, "Know thyself," but that's easier said than done. This class will help you determine your value based on God's measuring stick rather than the world's. We will focus on accepting the things about yourself that you cannot change and letting God change the things that can be or need to be changed. We will also talk about some simple things you can do to take care of yourself because you cannot possibly be there for anyone else if you are not there for yourself.

Part 4: You and Your Spouse. Your marriage is the single most important relationship you will have this side of Heaven. That's so true, I'll say it again. Your Marriage Is The Single Most Important Relationship You Will Have This Side of Heaven! God instituted marriage in the

Garden of Eden ([Genesis 2:21-22](#)). Yet the divorce rate in the United States is astronomical, although exact statistics are hard to determine. According to “nationmaster.com” the United States has the dubious honor of being Number 1 of the top 100 countries in numbers of divorce. You won’t want to miss this class because even a good marriage can be made better, and God’s plan for your marriage is that it be a little bit of Heaven here on earth.

Part 5: You and Your Kids. When Rita was pregnant for her sixth (and totally unplanned) baby, she read [Psalm 127:3 Lo, children are an heritage from the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is His reward.](#)” She determined right then and there that whatever she had done to earn such a reward, she would never do it again. Joking aside, did you ever consider that your kids are the only thing you have that you can take to Heaven with you? And yet they don’t belong to you. They are only “loaned” to you from the Lord. You’ll hear some interesting and perhaps surprising things in this class.

Part 6: You and Your Family, Friends, and Co-Workers. Most of us would do just fine if we only had to deal with our spouse and kids (OK! I said “most” not “all”). However, life is more complicated than that, and this class will help people like Norma learn to get along with their mothers-in-law and people like Donnie to get along with their step-fathers. We’ll even take a stab at (not literally) trying to get along with that moron in the next cubicle or office. Seriously, we ARE in relationships with all these people, whether we want to be or not, and this class will address these relationships. Just a note about friends (and you’ll hear this again): You either are or are fast becoming what your friends are.

Part 7: You and Your Church and Ministry. Where do you fit in this place called Capital Baptist Church? What is the difference between serving the Lord and “full time” service? We will talk about God’s plan for you in the local church and what “ministry” really means. At the end of this class, we will be giving you a S.H.A.P.E. folder to take home to complete (and return to us the following week). Even if you have recently done a S.H.A.P.E. profile, you should do another one because God continues to work in us, and things change when God gets busy in our lives.

Part 8: You and Your Broken Heart. You may think that nobody could possibly understand the tears you’ve cried or know the heartache you are carrying right now. You’re wrong. God does know and He understands. We’ll be talking about some of the reasons that heartaches come into our lives and how we can have the victory regardless of our circumstances. Where is God when you hurt? We won’t have a complete answer, but we will share what we have learned in our own heartaches and from the heartaches of others. Come and let us put our arms around you through the teaching of this class and help you keep on keeping on, trusting that God will make a way where there is no way.

Part 9: Who Am I, God? The Beginning of An Answer? By the time we get to this class, we hope you will have learned a little more about your relationship with God, a little more about yourself, and a little more about how you interact with the people in your life. We’ll do a review of what we’ve learned and talk about next steps and how you can continue the growth you have

begun.

Some basic truths that will be incorporated into every class include the following:

We don't always see or even hear ourselves clearly. Ever seen a picture of yourself or heard your voice on a tape and been surprised at how different you look or sound than you thought?

1 Corinthians 13:12 says, "Now we see through a glass, darkly; then face to face; but then shall I know even as also I am known." Even a mirror does not give us an accurate picture of ourselves because everything is reversed.

We don't always know why we do what we do. We are usually NOT the best judge of our true motives. Family backgrounds, habits, and experiences all influence our actions and/or reactions, and we are experts at deceiving ourselves. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? Jeremiah 17:9* Wally Beebe used to say about motives that there are three reasons people do things:

The reason we tell ourselves.

The reason we tell others.

The real reason.

We don't always recognize the effect of outside influences and pressures.
(The ham)

- That's the way it's ***always*** been done. If it worked for Mama, Grandma, my old English teacher...or fill in the blank, it's good enough for me! (p.s. Your Mama didn't do everything right.)

- My Mama did it that way, and ***no way*** am I going to do it the same way ***she*** did! (p.s. Your Mama didn't do everything wrong!)

- Peer pressure.

Not only applicable to teenagers (Rita and Barbara/the Six Flags ride).

All of us care what others think about us. (The Nike swoosh, New Balance shoes/Paying extra for the privilege of advertising their products!).

We need input from outside sources if we are to see ourselves as we really are both as individuals and in relationships.

From the Word of God.

Reading (devotions) *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. II Timothy 2:25*

Hearing (Small Groups, Church, etc) *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Romans 10:17*

Prayer and Meditation. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. James 1:5

Input from trusted friends. Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. Proverbs 27:17

NOT “yes” men.

Real friends tell you the truth.

If you don't have a friend who is really honest with you, get one.

Criticism from our enemies. This is bumper sticker wisdom at it's best!

- God sometimes (even often) uses the most obnoxious people to point out our faults in the most abrasive ways in order to show us areas we need to grow or change.

- Get over yourself and look for the grain of truth in every criticism.

The Holy Spirit.

Convicts of sin. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin... John 16:8a

Opens our understanding of the Word of God. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: John 16:13a

We need to objectively identify where we are and be willing to grow as individuals and as part of any relationship.

Remember who and what we are. People are both unique and similar, the same and different.

Have you ever really taken an objective look at yourself and your relationships? Probably not. We tend to either give ourselves more credit than we deserve (For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think... Romans 12:3a) Or we use “reverse pride” and tell ourselves and others that we are the WORST. The truth is most of us are just average...average good and average bad and average talented, and, in spite of our uniqueness...and you really ARE unique...we're not that different from everyone or anyone else.

Recognize our basic disposition and personality. are unique to us (Joseph and Nathan) and do not change drastically from birth.

Realize we will never be perfect. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 1 John 1:8

- We all have an inborn propensity for sin. We sin because we are sinners rather than becoming

sinner because we sin.

- We all have areas of strength that can be further developed.
- We all have areas where we need to grow.

Ready ourselves for change.

- Everyone hates change (Sketch of Clint Eastwood and his 44 Magnum)
- Change creates fear, and fear is a basic emotion that hides behind a lot of basic character flaws. **Nobody** acts nicely when they are frightened.
- Change takes us outside our comfort zone.
(How comfortable is that watch feeling about now?)
- Change can be incredibly painful.

Growth requires a willingness to change. What makes us willing to change?

- **Salvation.** Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17 This does NOT mean instant spiritual maturity. Babies are babies, whether physically or spiritually. But God “begins a good work in you” (Philippians 1:6) when you trust Christ, and growth may be rapid or slow, but there is absolutely a change that takes place. (Mike and Belinda)
- **The Holy Spirit.** Sometimes the Holy Spirit convicts us of the need to change, and we submit (willingly or reluctantly) and do so. This is actually the exception rather than the rule.
- **Time.** Sometimes we change over time just because we grow up and mature.
- **Painful circumstances.** God sometimes allows pain in our lives because pain creates in us a willingness to change, and that willingness to change causes us to grow. We become willing to change when it hurts more to stay the same than it does to change.
- First step is acknowledging the need to change and grow (Dr. Phil’s law: We cannot change what we have not acknowledged.)
- Changes are best affected if they are gradual.
 - Aim for progress rather than perfection.
 - Reward and congratulate yourself for progress.
 - Be gentle with yourself when you blow it.

- Permanent changes start with our thoughts. Thoughts become actions, actions become patterns of behavior, patterns become habits and new habits result in change. It takes doing the same thing 13 times consistently before we begin to develop a new pattern of behavior.

Recap of this Evening's Session

Questions / Answers

Look Ahead: