BEING GOD

STEALING GOD'S POWER, GLORY AND KINGDOM

Leader's Guide

HIGH PLAINS BIBLE MISSION
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Being God: Stealing God's Power, Glory and Kingdom

Group Study

Leader's Guide with Discussion Questions

Welcome, Leader

Thank you for guiding this group. Your role is not to have all the answers. It is to create a setting where people can think honestly, listen to one another, and listen to God. This guide gives you a plan for each of the eight sessions: an opening question, discussion questions, an activity, a closing prayer idea, and a short assignment for the week ahead.

How to Use This Guide

- Read the assigned chapters and watch or read the session script before each meeting.
- You do not need to ask every question. Choose the five or six that fit your group and your time.
- The questions move from understanding, to Scripture, to personal reflection, to application. Spend the most time on reflection and application.
- Silence is fine. Give people time to think before you fill the space.

Ground Rules to Share at the First Meeting

- What is shared in the group stays in the group.
- Everyone may speak, and no one is required to.
- Disagreement is welcome, and it should be respectful.
- We speak for ourselves, using "I" statements, rather than diagnosing other people.
- We come to learn together, not to win arguments.

Suggested Session Flow

Segment	Time
Welcome and opening question	10 minutes
Video	10 minutes
Discussion	35 minutes
Application	10 minutes
Closing and prayer	10 minutes

Session 1: Whose Life Is It?

Chapters: Introduction and Chapter 2, Ownership

Key Scripture: Malachi 3:8, Jeremiah 17:9-10, Proverbs 4:23

Theme: God owns everything, including us. Ownership carries heavy burdens, and we have been taking what belongs to Him.

Opening Question

Tell us about something you owned that cost more, in money, time, or worry, than you expected.

Discussion Questions

1. When you hear the statement “God owns everything, including you,” what is your first reaction? Comfort, resistance, curiosity, or something else?
2. The introduction says that many of us have put God in a management position. What does that look like in everyday life? Where have you seen it in yourself?
3. The author notes that “I,” “me,” and “my” are ownership words. Listen to the way you pray and talk about your problems. What do you notice?
4. How would it change the way you pray if you said, “He solved His problem that happened to involve me”?
5. The book says we steal God’s power, kingdom, and glory. Which of the three do you find yourself taking most often, and what does it look like?
6. Chapter 2 begins by asking whether you have ever owned something you wish you hadn’t. What burdens come with ownership, and who ends up carrying them?
7. The author asks whether he had become a boat owner or a slave to the boat. How does this help us understand what happens when we take ownership of things that belong to God?
8. Read Malachi 3:8. What might it mean to steal from God? What do you think God owns that we tend to take?
9. The author suggests that Adam took the Garden because it was there, just as the lake called him to buy a boat. When have you taken on something simply because it was available?
10. The author says that when he forgave and canceled the debts others owed him, he unknowingly handed ownership of those offenses to God. What do you make of that, and why might it have brought him joy?
11. Read Jeremiah 17:9-10 and Proverbs 4:23. Why might the desire to own be hard for us to see in ourselves?

Activity

Give each person a sheet of paper. Ask them to write down five things they often call “my,” such as my plans, my money, my reputation, my family, my problems. Invite them to circle the one they most need to hand back to God this week. No one has to share what they wrote.

Closing Prayer Idea

Invite each person to complete this sentence silently, and then say amen together: “Lord, I give back to You _____.”

Between Sessions

Read Chapters 3 and 4. For the week, notice each time you say “my” about something and ask whether it is really yours. If you would like more, Chapter 1 is an optional read.

Session 2: Whose Yoke, Whose Reins?

Chapters: Chapter 3, Burnout and Midlife Crisis, and Chapter 4, Living under His Ownership

Key Scripture: Matthew 11:28-30, Galatians 2:20, Psalm 139:1-2

Theme: Burnout comes from taking the reins that belong to God. Forgiveness releases what we should never have owned.

Opening Question

What is the heaviest thing you have ever had to carry or pull?

Discussion Questions

1. In your own words, what is a yoke, and how does a team of animals use it? Why does the owner's oversight matter?
2. Read Matthew 11:28-30. Who owns the yoke in this picture? What changes if Jesus is the driver rather than a copilot?
3. The author says burnout and midlife crisis can come from thinking we are doing everything alone and carrying the whole load. Have you experienced this? What did it feel like?
4. The author says we are all "alone in our own skin," and that only God truly knows us. Read Psalm 139:1-2. How does being fully known by God affect that loneliness?
5. How do the expectations we place on ourselves change when we move from the driver's seat to the yoke?
6. The chapter says that our spouses and co-workers are not our servants, but teammates under the same owner. Where might you be expecting too much from the people around you?
7. In Chapter 4, how did the author respond differently to the angry driver in Atlanta than he had thirty years earlier in Chicago? What had changed in between?
8. He and his wife prayed for the other driver. What would it take for you to do the same in a moment of irritation?
9. The author says that offenses against us are charged to God, who owns us. Does that idea free you, challenge you, or raise questions? Why?
10. The author says that in thirty years of church, he never heard a message on God's ownership. Has that been true for you? Why do you think the idea is so easy to miss?

Activity

Ask each person to think of one burden they are carrying that may not be theirs to carry, and to write it on an index card. Invite people who are willing to read theirs aloud. Then have the group pray over the cards together, handing each burden to the owner.

Closing Prayer Idea

Pray the invitation from Matthew 11 aloud together: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Between Sessions

Read Chapters 5 and 6. This week, when you feel overwhelmed, pause and ask, “Whose load is this?”

Session 3: Two Views: Mountaintop and Heaven

Chapters: Chapter 5, Bird's-Eye View, and Chapter 6, The View from Heaven

Key Scripture: John 3:16, Isaiah 55:9, Genesis 3

Theme: Seeing the whole Bible reveals a long contest over ownership, and imagining God's point of view changes how we see sin.

Opening Question

Where is a place you go to get a wider view, or to feel less lost?

Discussion Questions

1. The author felt lost in the Georgia forest and found relief on Stone Mountain. What are the "trees" that keep you from seeing the bigger picture of Scripture?
2. According to the chapter, what does a bird's-eye view of the Bible show at the beginning, at the end, and in between?
3. The author says the underlying battle is over who will be God. How does this change the way you read stories of sin and rebellion in the Bible?
4. Why can there be only one eternal God, and what does that mean for anyone who tries to take His place?
5. Read John 3:16. How does this verse fit with the idea that God has not given up on us, even though we have rebelled?
6. Chapter 6 asks us to walk "in God's shoes." Why do you think we so rarely think about what the Garden rebellion meant to God?
7. The author tells about the day his car was broken into and says that the damage to his person was worse than the loss of his things. Have you had a similar experience of violation? What did it teach you?
8. The author suggests that God may have felt insulted, diminished, and disrespected in the Garden. Does it change how you think of God to imagine His feelings this way? What cautions would you offer when we imagine God's emotions?
9. The author says that God did not lose the Garden, Adam did. What do you think he means?
10. Adam could have apologized and returned what he took. What would that have looked like, and how do we do it today?

Activity

Read the four closing questions of Chapter 6 aloud: Can you walk in God's shoes? Can you see what God sees? Can you feel what God feels? Can you know what God knows? Give the group a few minutes of quiet and invite them to write down what comes to mind.

Closing Prayer Idea

Offer a prayer of thanks for the fact that God has made a way back to Him, and ask for a heart that cares about what matters to God.

Between Sessions

Read Chapter 7. Look up Hebrews chapters 3 and 4 and read them through.

Session 4: The Place of Rest

Chapters: Chapter 7, New Testament Promised Land, the Place of Rest

Key Scripture: Hebrews 4:8-11, Leviticus 25:23, Psalm 24:1, Psalm 23:4

Theme: The Garden, the Promised Land, and the Place of Rest all belong to God. Rest comes when we stop taking ownership from Him.

Opening Question

When was the last time you felt truly at rest? What was happening?

Discussion Questions

1. Read Hebrews 4:8-11. What do you think the writer means by “that rest”?
2. The author says that without a target we drift. Why does it matter to know where we are headed in our spiritual life?
3. The chapter names three havens owned by God. How does each one reflect that God is the owner and people are caretakers?
4. What is the difference between possessing something and owning it? Where do you see that in your own life?
5. Read Leviticus 25:23. How does this verse shape how we should think about land, property, and possessions?
6. The author says the Place of Rest is not so much a matter of giving ownership to God as of ceasing to take it from Him. What is the difference?
7. Why does the author say that the Place of Rest is both restful and peaceful?
8. Think of Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Daniel. What did they understand about God that gave them peace in dangerous situations?
9. The author describes his peace before major brain surgery. What do you notice about the way he describes that peace? Does it raise any questions for you?
10. What is a problem you are tempted to treat as your own? What would it look like to hand it to the owner?

Leader Note

Some participants may be dealing with serious illness, loss, or fear. The author is not promising that trust guarantees a particular outcome. He quotes Job, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.” Be gentle with anyone for whom this chapter is close to home.

Activity

Draw three columns on a board labeled Garden, Promised Land, and Place of Rest. Ask the group to fill in what each one has in common, and how each one differs.

Closing Prayer Idea

Invite the group to pray aloud, one sentence each, a prayer that begins with “Lord, I trust You with...”

Between Sessions

Read Chapters 8, 9, and 10. This week, when you feel the urge to fix a problem yourself, pause and ask God whether He would like your help or would like you to stand back.

Session 5: Translation, Forgiveness, and Two Levels of Life

Chapters: Chapter 8, Lost in Translation, Chapter 9, The Discovery, and Chapter 10, Two Levels of Christian Life

Key Scripture: Matthew 16:24, Mark 7:15, Matthew 5:8, Matthew 6:12-13, John 10:10, Ephesians 2:8-9

Theme: Translation may hide the idea of ownership, forgiveness is the door to seeing it, and the Christian life can be lived with God as manager or with God as owner.

Leader Note on Timing

This session covers three chapters. If time is short, choose questions from each chapter rather than trying to cover everything. You might also consider spending part of Session 6's opening time to return to Chapter 10.

Opening Question

Have you ever misunderstood a word or phrase, and later learned what it really meant?

Discussion Questions

1. The author says translation is more an art than a science. What does this tell us about reading the Bible with humility?
2. What is the difference, according to Chapter 8, between LORD in capital letters and Lord with a lowercase "ord"?
3. The author says that "lord" once meant an owner but has lost that sense. Do you think of God as your owner when you hear the word "Lord"? Why or why not?
4. Compare "deny himself" with "disown himself" in Matthew 16:24. How does each word change the way you hear Jesus's invitation?
5. Read Mark 7:15. How did this verse change the way the author understood his anger?
6. The author explains forgiveness as canceling a debt. What debts, large or small, do people tend to hold against others?
7. The author says that forgiving does not require the other person to be present, and that it is not the same as reconciliation. Why is that distinction important?
8. Explain in your own words what he means by "thine" being an ownership word, and why that makes instant forgiveness possible.
9. In Chapter 10, the author describes Christianity as a two-story building rather than a skyscraper. Why does he warn against building more levels, such as titles and honors?
10. Read Ephesians 2:8-9. What does the author say about everyone on the ground floor, whatever their job?
11. What is the difference between the first floor, where God is manager, and the second floor, where God is owner? Why does the author say that owners can fire managers but managers cannot fire owners?
12. The author says the second floor is not something we grow into but something we find. What do you think he means? What might finding it look like?

13. The author says that staying on the second floor requires a daily battle. Which floor do you most often live on, and what draws you back?

Leader Note

Forgiveness can be painful and slow, and no one should be pressured to say words they are not ready to say. Make clear that the aim is freedom for the person who was hurt, and that forgiveness does not mean excusing harm or returning to an unsafe situation.

The two-story picture could be heard as ranking believers. The author is clear that all are equal on the ground floor, that people on both floors are saved by grace, and that the second floor is found rather than earned. Encourage participants to talk about their own experience rather than labeling others, and invite them to test these ideas against Scripture.

Activity

Invite each person to write privately the names or situations of anyone to whom they feel they hold a debt, without sharing it. Then offer a short moment of silent prayer in which people can cancel those debts before God. Have each person decide privately what to do with their paper.

Closing Prayer Idea

Pray the Lord’s Prayer together, pausing slightly at “forgive us our debts” and again at “for thine is the kingdom.”

Between Sessions

Read Chapters 11 and 12. This week, when someone offends you, try saying silently, “This is between them and God.”

Session 6: The Garden Crime Scene

Chapters: Chapter 11, In the Beginning, the Garden of Eden, and Chapter 12, The Garden Crime Scene Investigation

Key Scripture: Genesis 2:16-17, Genesis 3:1-19, Isaiah 14:12-14, Proverbs 28:13

Theme: The failure in the Garden began as an attitude of the heart, an attempt to take God's place.

Opening Question

What was the first rule you remember being given as a child, and did you keep it?

Discussion Questions

1. Read Genesis 3 together. How have you usually heard this story explained?
2. The author says it is usually read as disobedience, a behavior problem. What are the consequences of a view of God that is based mainly on behavior?
3. The author says Adam's attitude failed before his behavior. What are some signs in your own life that attitude drives behavior?
4. What does the author say was the purpose of God's one rule in the Garden?
5. Make a list of Adam's mistakes as the chapter presents them. Which one do you see most often in yourself?
6. The author compares the punishment in the Garden with a misdemeanor versus a felony. Does this comparison help you see the seriousness of the event? What might it overlook?
7. The author notes that "mine" is the first word children learn without being taught. What do you think that says about human nature?
8. Chapter 12 argues that the serpent's offer was to "be God," not just to "be like God." Read Genesis 3:5 in several translations. What do you notice?
9. The author says that the sin of the Garden brought death to the spirit, the soul, and the body. What do you think about this explanation?
10. Where do we see blaming in our own world, and what does Proverbs 28:13 say about what to do instead?

Leader Note

Interpretations of Genesis 3:5 and Isaiah 14:12-14 vary among Bible scholars. The author reads the Hebrew phrase in Genesis 3:5 as "be God" and reads Isaiah 14 as describing Satan. You may invite participants to consult commentaries and reliable language resources. The practical question is the same however the group lands: do we trust God as God, or do we take His place?

Activity

Divide the group into pairs. Have each pair take two minutes to retell the Garden story as an attitude story rather than a rules story. Then ask the pairs to share what stood out.

Closing Prayer Idea

Pray a prayer of confession together, naming the ways we have tried to take God's place, and thanking Him for forgiveness.

Between Sessions

Read Chapter 13. Map out Israel's route from Egypt to the Jordan, using a Bible atlas or a map in your Bible.

Session 7: Crossing the Wilderness

Chapters: Chapter 13, Journey through the Wilderness

Key Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:5-6, Numbers 13 and 14, Joshua 2:9-11

Theme: Israel's journey is a picture of our own, moving from the world, through the wilderness of self-ownership, into the Place of Rest.

Opening Question

Tell about a long journey you took, and what you remember most about it.

Discussion Questions

1. Read 1 Corinthians 10:5-6. Why does Paul say that the wilderness story is given as an example for us?
2. Retell the story of Israel from Egypt to the Jordan in a few sentences. What stands out to you?
3. What does the author say Egypt represents? What does the Red Sea represent? What does the wilderness represent?
4. Why did Israel refuse to enter the land at Kadesh? How does this relate to how we treat ownership?
5. What did Rahab say to the spies in Joshua 2, and why does the author find her words important?
6. The author names the "giant" we face as the truth that God wants all of us, not just a portion. Why is this such a frightening idea?
7. The author describes believers who settle near the Red Sea, near Mount Sinai, or who are led astray by a doctrine or a personality. Where have you seen these patterns? Where have you been tempted to stay?
8. Why does the author call forgiveness the bridge across the Jordan? What does it mean to cross over?
9. The author compares Jericho with the next areas of life that we must give over to God. What area of your life might be your Jericho?
10. Where do you see yourself on the map right now?

Leader Note

Guard against using this map to label other people or other churches. Invite each person to speak only about their own position and journey. The author is clear that the wilderness is far better than Egypt, and that God feeds His people there.

Activity

Draw a simple map on a board or large sheet of paper showing Egypt, the Red Sea, Sinai, Kadesh, the wilderness, the Jordan, and Jericho. Give each person a sticky note and invite them to place it where they believe they are. They need not sign it. Talk together about what the group notices.

Closing Prayer Idea

Ask each person to pray silently about the giant they most need to face, and close by thanking God that the battle is His.

Between Sessions

Read Chapter 14. This week, memorize 1 Chronicles 29:11, or the last line of the Lord's Prayer.

Session 8: Thine Is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory

Chapters: Chapter 14, Foundations in Scripture

Key Scripture: Matthew 6:13, 1 Chronicles 29:11 and 14, Psalm 51:4, Psalm 24:1, Psalm 100:3, 1 Corinthians 6:20, John 3:16

Theme: God's ownership is the foundation of Scripture. He owns us twice, by creation and by redemption.

Opening Question

What has been the most meaningful or surprising thing you have learned in this study?

Discussion Questions

1. Why does the author say that "for" is a foundation word in the last line of the Lord's Prayer?
2. Read the Lord's Prayer slowly. How does each request depend on the statement that He is the owner?
3. Read Psalm 51:4. What does the author say this verse proves about who owns us?
4. Explain the car illustration in your own words. How does it help us understand forgiveness and judgment?
5. The author says that if we owned even a small part of ourselves, God would have to consult us. What does he mean by that, and how does it affect how you view God's right to judge?
6. Read 1 Chronicles 29:14 and Job 41:11. If everything already belongs to God, what does it mean to give something to Him?
7. How did the early believers in Acts 2 show that they understood God's ownership?
8. The author looks at the heavens, the earth, and the people on it. Which of these made the strongest impression on you, and why?
9. Read Luke 19:10. How does the idea that God owns what is lost change the meaning of this verse?
10. Read 1 Corinthians 6:20. What does it mean that God owns us twice?
11. Looking back over the whole study, what has changed in the way you see God, yourself, and other people?

Leader Note

Psalm 51:4 does not mean that wrongs against people do not matter. The author's point is that all wrongs are ultimately accountable to God as owner, and that this frees us from collecting on debts. If a participant is working through a situation involving injustice or harm, remind the group that seeking safety, seeking help, and pursuing what is right can all go together with releasing a debt to God. Some translations omit the final phrase of the Lord's Prayer. The author notes that the same truth appears in 1 Chronicles 29:11. Invite curious participants to look into this further.

Activity

Ask each person to write a short prayer or statement that begins, “Lord, I am Yours, and I give You...” Invite those who are willing to read their statements aloud, and then close with a time of shared worship or silence.

Closing Prayer Idea

Pray the last line of the Lord’s Prayer together, slowly: “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.”

After the Study

Consider meeting once more to share what has changed. If the group wants to continue, the remaining chapters of the book, including Chapters 1, 15, and 16 and the Conclusion, can be read together. Encourage each person to pick one step to continue, such as a daily prayer of surrender, a forgiveness practice, or a friend to check in with.