

# discipleship essentials

Essentials for Spiritual Leadership  
Study Guide

## CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

### LESSON 3: THE CREATOR

#### INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Discipleship Essentials module titled Christian Doctrine. This series of lessons examines doctrines which are foundational to our faith, with an emphasis on how incorrect doctrine can negatively impact true faith. Doctrine is the set of beliefs that determine how we practise our faith. It is critical that Christians understand correct doctrine about the nature of God and salvation, especially if they are engaged in teaching and discipling. This module examines scriptures related to a number of core doctrines of the Christian Church, and also some of the areas of confusion and error associated with each doctrine.

The Study Guide is intended for an individual to look deeper into a specific lesson on their own. The lessons can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials, such as the video and audio productions found on [www.discipleshipessentials.org](http://www.discipleshipessentials.org).

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# CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

## LESSON 3: THE CREATOR

### WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

This lesson looks at the doctrine of God as our Creator; all things were created by God and did not evolve accidentally.

### JUST SO YOU KNOW...

There are some doctrines that cause controversy within the Church. The exact unfolding of end-times events is one, and the creation story in Genesis 1 is another. This lesson does not take a position on whether there was a literal six-day creation, or whether God created the world over a period of time; instead it looks at the core theological doctrine about creation plainly seen in Scripture. While this might appear to be a peripheral doctrine at first, our understanding of the nature and purpose of human beings, of sin and salvation, as well as the power and authority of God, all rely heavily on the truth that God created and sustains the universe in a personal, purposeful way.

## GETTING STARTED

1. What do you think are the biggest life-questions people ask themselves? (Examples: Why am I here? What is my purpose? Where did the world come from? Is there a point to existence? Would anyone miss me if I were gone?)

2. Do you think that belief in science and belief in religion are compatible? On what issues do they agree? On what issues are they in conflict?



# STUDY

❖ **IN THE BEGINNING, GOD...:** Genesis 1:1 declares that, *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”* These first words of the Bible not only point to the doctrine of monotheism, one God only, but that He is the Creator of all. The concept of God alone being Creator is central to understanding everything else the Scripture reveals to us.

- The account in Genesis of the creation of the world was written by Moses, receiving his knowledge from God Himself on Mount Sinai, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The book of Genesis belongs to the set of books called “the Law” or the “Books of Moses”. Many other sources, including the words of Jesus, confirm that Moses authored the creation account. Thus, the doctrine of creation was passed directly from God to humankind (John 5:45-47).
- No one was alive to witness God's design and creation of the world except God Himself. Therefore, we should trust God who is faithful in all things to tell the truth in His account of the creation of the world. To distrust that the world was created by God and for His purposes is to distrust God Himself.
- The truth that God created and sustains us and everything in our visible and invisible universe is a foundational doctrine within Christianity (Colossians 1:15-17).
- To review, doctrines are what we are taught and which we pass on to others. One of the essential doctrines of the Church is that of *creation*. This doctrine is foundational to many other doctrines, including our understanding of sin and redemption, and the nature of God and people.
  - **The doctrine of creation holds that out of nothing, God alone created and sustains the universe and everything in it for His divine purposes.**
- Read over Genesis 1 and 2 carefully, and answer the following questions:

What existed before Genesis?	
Out of what did God create the universe?	
What was God's evaluation of His creation?	
What was different about the creation of man and woman when compared with the creation of all other things?	



❖ **GOD THE CREATOR:** The first aspect of the doctrine of creation is that God alone created the universe and everything in it for His divine purposes. It is important for us to see that our beliefs about sin, salvation and the purpose of the world are right here in the beginning of the Bible. The teaching that it was God who created all things is repeated throughout God’s Word and clearly seen in the following chart.

Statement	In Genesis	Other Scriptures
Before creation, God was all that existed. Everything has a beginning and owes its existence to God.	Genesis 1:1	Psalms 90:2 Revelation 4:11 Hebrews 1:10 John 1:3
God created all things through His Word (Jesus).	Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26	Colossians 1:16 John 1:1-3 Hebrews 11:3 Psalm 33:6
God created man and woman in a purposeful, personal way.	Genesis 1:26-27, Genesis 2:4-25	Isaiah 45:11-12 Acts 17:24-28 1 Timothy 2:13 Psalm 139:13-14 Matthew 19:4-6
God saw that His creation was ‘very good’.	Genesis 1:31	1 Timothy 4:4 Isaiah 40:26 Psalm 104:31

➤ Why does it matter that God created us in a personal, purposeful way, and that His creation was very good?

❖ **GOD THE SUSTAINER:** The second aspect of the doctrine of creation is that God alone sustains the universe and everything in it for His divine purposes. To say that God sustains His creation is to say that we only continue our existence because He actively wills it to be so. His power is what gives us life.

- Part of this aspect of the doctrine of creation is that God is both immanent (involved in, active with) and transcendent (above or greater than). God’s creation depends on Him, but is separate from Him.
- Consider the powerful ways God sustains the earth as revealed in His Word. Read the following verses and write down what you learn:



Psalm 54:4	
Hebrews 1:3	
Colossians 1:16-17	
Isaiah 46:3-4	

- How is God involved in His creation?

- What does God provide that allows us to have life? (Think of the many aspects of creation, such as gravity and sunlight that are necessary for us to remain alive!)

❖ **GOD'S PURPOSE IN CREATION:** The doctrine of creation states that not only has God created the earth and sustains it, but that it was made purposefully. We can see this also throughout the pages of God's Word. Creation was not a passive event! We may wonder why God made us in the first place, and what His purpose is with this elaborate, beautiful and complicated world!

- **God doesn't need His creation:** We must understand that God lacks nothing. While we are entirely dependent on God, God is not dependent on us (Acts 17:24-25). Therefore,
  - God did not create the world because He needed us.
  - God did not create the world because of loneliness.
  - God did not create the world because He longed to be worshipped.
- **God lavishes love on His creation:** We know that God expresses love to His creation, and that we came into being because of Jesus and for Jesus (Colossians 1:15-17). What are some of the purposes for which we were made?



- o **God created the world to express infinite love and to have relationship with humanity.** He pursued this relationship with Adam and Eve before sin entered the world, and continues to offer restoration of relationship with us because of His great love. Write down what you learn from these verses:

Romans 5:8	
1 John 3:1	
Jeremiah 31:3	

- o **God created the world to reveal His glory and share His glory.** God does not need the worship of anyone, but is worthy of worship. He gives us the joy of delighting in His greatness, in His love that satisfies us, and in relationship with Him that fulfills us.

Romans 8:17	
Isaiah 43:6-7	
Revelation 4:11	

- o **God created the world to reveal who He is to His creation.** Some of the details of creation reveal to us more of who God is! God shares Himself with us through His artwork – His creation!

Romans 1:18-20	
Job 12:7-9	
Psalms 19:1-2	



- o **God created the world to fulfill His eternal plans.** God’s plan of redemption is also a plan of conquering evil, and bringing people back into relationship with Him. Creation is where these eternal plans are played out. God has purposes for what happens here on earth, and indeed He had plans for these things before He created the world!

Ephesians 3:9-11	
Ephesians 1:1-11	
2 Timothy 1:9-10	

❖ **Doctrinal Errors related to Creation:** The Church believes that God created and sustains us for His purposes. But other religious ideas and philosophies may confuse us and lead to incorrect beliefs if we are not grounded in God’s Word. The following are some common errors regarding creation. Each directly contradicts what God’s Word says about creation, and what the Church has upheld as correct doctrine:

- **Materialism:** Only the material world exists, there is no spiritual realm and no god. The world, and all that is in it, are products of a natural accident and the evolution of organisms. We were not created, we have no purpose.
- **Pantheism:** Only the spiritual realm exists – there is only God. We are all a part of God, who is neither transcendent nor personal, and we have existed eternally with Him.
- **Deism:** God is distant and impersonal. He began the events that led to our being formed and created, but does not sustain creation. God is not immanent, we have no purpose.
- **Theistic Natural Evolution:** God created the world, but the creation account in Genesis is only a story. God used the processes of evolution to form the world as we know it, and there was no historical Adam and Eve, or sin entering the world. There was no special creation of humanity, rather we are one animal among millions of others.

There are Christians and churches who hold to the belief that evolution may have been the means by which God created the world, but they still hold to a belief in the basic doctrines of creation as outlined in this lesson.

❖ **Conclusion:** It is God alone who created and sustains us. It is because of Him and in Him that we live and move and have our being. What we believe about our purpose affects everything about us. This is an important doctrine of the Church.



## SUMMARY

- ❖ The doctrine of creation holds that out of nothing, God alone created and sustains the universe and everything in it for His divine purposes.
- ❖ Nothing existed before God, and it is through God that everything has been made.
- ❖ God created all things through His Word (Jesus) and He saw that His creation was very good.
- ❖ Man and woman were made in a purposeful, personal way.
- ❖ God not only created us, but sustains us as He does the entire universe.
- ❖ God created us to express His infinite love, to reveal and share His glory, to reveal His nature to His creation, and to fulfill His eternal plans.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1.

Do you believe that God is immanent – that is, active and present in our daily lives and not a far-off, impersonal force? What proof from your life would you offer to someone who is struggling to believe this?

2.

Does your life reflect the belief that there is more to existence than just the material world? How would your life be different without your belief in God?