

## ***Explore God: 7 Big Questions***

### **Simplified Facilitator Guide**

This resource is simplified for use in a Q Place group and includes:

1. Talking Points to Introduce Explore God Video Discussions
  2. Discussion Questions for Each Video
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#### **1. Talking Points to Introduce Explore God Discussions**

Use this list of informal guidelines to orient your group when you start a discussion of Explore God videos or when anyone new joins your discussions.

- This group is an opportunity for all of us to consider what we think about lots of spiritual issues.
- We'll watch two short films and then discuss them, poke holes in them, agree, and disagree.
- There's nothing for you to prepare each week, and you can participate at whatever level you feel comfortable.
- The great thing about this group is that it's a discussion. It's about exploration.
- I'm not here to convince anyone about anything. I'm on the journey just like you.
- The reality is that none of us has it all figured out. We all have questions and we can probably learn something from everyone.
- I would like to ask that each of us be respectful of each other's views. We're not here to debate or argue.
- We're here to foster great conversation around some of the most important questions we all have.
- When we met before, we shared questions that we would ask God. Many of those questions are addressed in the "7 Big Questions" video series, and they are good discussion starters.
- The first two videos in the series are called "Does Life Have a Purpose?" and we'll start by watching the short one, which is called "The Pulse of the World on Purpose." It's a collection of many ideas from people around the world. As you listen, think about which viewpoint you can identify with, and we'll talk about that after we watch the video.

## 2. Discussion Questions for Each Video

This section includes questions and a Scripture verse for each topic.

### 1. Does Life Have a Purpose?

#### ***Pulse of the World:***

- Did you identify with anyone’s expressed views in the film? If so, who and what resonated with you?
- Are you surprised to learn that 85 percent of people are clear about the meaning and purpose of their life (64 percent strongly agree and 21 percent somewhat agree)? Why or why not?

#### ***The Curiosity Collective:***

- In what ways can you identify with any of the stories in *The Curiosity Collective*? What did you find intriguing or compelling?
- In the video, Lysa observed, “If I could just discover the right thing, a better job, financial blessing, the right person to love me, the right kids with the right accolades, then I’d feel satisfied.” In what things have you sought satisfaction? Did it satisfy?
- Can you share both a time when life seemed like a random series of events and a time when it seemed like there was an intentional plan unfolding?
- In what ways might someone’s view of eternity affect their sense of meaning and purpose?
- If you believe we all have a purpose, what role does God play in that—if any?
- Jesus states in Matthew 7:7, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” How do you think that statement would relate to the question of finding purpose in life?

### 2. Is There a God?

#### ***Pulse of the World:***

- Did you identify with anyone’s expressed views in the film? If so, who and what resonated with you?
- To what do you attribute the 11 percent decline in the belief in God over the past twenty years?

#### ***The Curiosity Collective:***

- In what ways can you identify with any of the stories in *The Curiosity Collective*? What did you find intriguing or compelling?
- What makes it easy to believe in God? What makes it hard to believe in God?
- What role—if any—did God play in your family when you were growing up? How does your upbringing impact your beliefs now?
- In the video, Andy shares that he’s convinced God exists because of “cosmological constants” and their impact on life. What has convinced you that God either does or does not exist?
- What do you think of Corey’s suggestion, “If there is a God, I can’t prove him, nor can I disprove him with science”?
- What do you think could convince you to change your current stance on God’s existence—be that belief or unbelief?
- Psalm 19:1 says, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.” In what ways have you experienced (or not experienced) God’s presence through creation? How did those experiences affect your belief (or disbelief) in God?

### 3. Why Does God Allow Pain and Suffering?

#### ***Pulse of the World:***

- Did you identify with anyone's expressed views in the film? If so, who and what resonated with you?
- Was it surprising to learn that the top question people would ask God is "Why is there pain and suffering in the world?" What would be some of the questions you'd ask God?

#### ***The Curiosity Collective:***

- In what ways can you identify with any of the stories in The Curiosity Collective? What did you find intriguing or compelling?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how difficult is it for you to reconcile the existence of both suffering and God (1 = easy; 10 = impossible)? Why?
- One of the Pulse speakers noted, "Some of the best lessons I've learned in life . . . came from very painful times." In what ways might good come from bad? Do you have any experience with this?
- If there's a God, why do you think he allows evil in the world?
- In the video, what did you think of James's suggestion that God "understands our suffering . . . [and] is seeking to heal it"?
- In Romans 8:18, the apostle Paul says, "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." What do you think it would take for you to be able to agree with Paul?

### 4. Is Christianity Too Narrow?

#### ***Pulse of the World:***

- Did you identify with anyone's expressed views in the film? If so, who and what resonated with you?
- What do you think about the statistic that "nearly half of all US adults believe it doesn't matter what religious faith you follow because they all teach the same lessons"?

#### ***The Curiosity Collective:***

- In what ways can you identify with any of the stories in The Curiosity Collective? What did you find intriguing or compelling?
- Does the media represent Christianity accurately? Do Christians represent Christianity accurately?
- In the video, Corey suggests, "When people say that all religions are the same, that sounds really humble and tolerant." Why does he go on to say that those claims are actually exclusive?
- How have people used religion for good? For bad?
- What are some examples in which most people believe that narrow ideas are good?
- What exclusive claims do you hold? Do you allow yourself to be vulnerable when discussing your views with others?
- In Jeremiah 29:4-11, God calls his people to be present in their city in a way that enables it to flourish, while remaining focused on God. "Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper" (Jeremiah 29:7). What are some practical ways you can seek the peace and prosperity of your city? How might these actions contribute to the common good in the world?

## 5. Is Jesus Really God?

### ***Pulse of the World:***

- Did you identify with anyone’s expressed views in the film? If so, who and what resonated with you?
- Does it seem consistent with your experience that “67 percent of US adults . . . have a personal relationship with Jesus”? Why or why not?

### ***The Curiosity Collective:***

- In what ways can you identify with any of the stories in The Curiosity Collective? What did you find intriguing or compelling?
- Was Jesus a historical figure, in your opinion? Why or why not?
- What did Leonce mean when he said, “Religion says ‘I do, therefore I’m loved.’ Jesus says, ‘You’re loved, therefore you do’”?
- Christians believe that sin separates humanity from God. Yet Jesus, through his death, bridges that gap. Why do you think Jesus had to die in order to accomplish this?
- In the video, Bryan says “[Jesus] was resurrected—rose up from the dead—with over five hundred witnesses. They saw him and, based on that encounter, were willing to die in order to testify as to what they saw.” What do you think about his claim?
- What do you think about Jesus’ claim to be God?
- In Mark 8:29, Jesus asks Peter a heavy question. “‘But what about you?’ he asked. ‘Who do you say I am?’ Peter answered, ‘You are the Messiah.’” Based on the evidence you have heard, who do you say Jesus is?

## 6. Is the Bible Reliable?

### ***Pulse of the World:***

- Did you identify with anyone’s expressed views in the film? If so, who and what resonated with you?
- What does it mean that “80 percent of Americans identify the Bible as sacred literature yet only 43 percent of Christians firmly believe the Bible is accurate in all of the principles it teaches”?

### ***The Curiosity Collective:***

- In what ways can you identify with any of the stories in The Curiosity Collective? What did you find intriguing or compelling?
- What are a few of the various sources of truth that people consider?
- If someone asked you to describe the story of the Bible, what would you say?
- Do you think it’s possible that a book could be inspired by God? Why or why not?
- As quoted in the film, how might it be possible that the Bible is “the true human story that underlies our experience and our existence”?
- How relevant is the Bible to your everyday life?
- What might make you inclined to rely on the Bible as a source of truth or guidance in your life?
- Isaiah 40:8 says, “The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.” In what ways might the Bible be “offering a better story, a story to help make sense of our crazy human existence”?

## 7. Can I Know God Personally?

### ***Pulse of the World:***

- Did you identify with anyone's expressed views in the film? If so, who and what resonated with you?
- Is it surprising that 75 percent of adults desire a close relationship with God? Why or why not?

### ***The Curiosity Collective:***

- In what ways can you identify with any of the stories in The Curiosity Collective? What did you find intriguing or compelling?
- Why might someone resist knowing God personally?
- Propaganda stated that "sin . . . has broken that covenant with [God]." What do you think he meant by that?
- In the video, Pete said, "[Jesus] made it possible for our sins to be removed because his blood was spotless; he was a perfect sacrifice for us." How could Jesus be perfect? What are the implications of that?
- How might one develop a personal relationship with God?
- In Matthew 7:7, Jesus says that if we seek, we will find; and if we knock, the door will be opened. What might this mean?
- In Matthew 11:28, Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." James 4:8 says, "Come near to God and he will come near to you." In what ways are you craving a relationship with God?