



SIX WORDS

Week 1

The Very Good Gospel by Lisa Sharon Harper
 Chapters 1-3

SIX WORDS

October 16 -
 November 20

*Reading Scripture
 Through The
 Language Of Jesus*

Jesus was not a Christian. He was Jewish. In this series we're going to look at the meanings of six words in the language that Jesus spoke, giving us a fuller picture of his message and his hope for the world. Our prayer is that by unearthing the meaning of these words, our church community is called to the action of living a more abundant life.

The first three chapters serve to introduce us to the idea of *shalom* and understand how sin plays a part in the Genesis story where we first find *shalom*. The study guides in this series will be laid out so that even if all your group members have not read all three chapters yet, they can still participate and learn from the discussion.

OPENING:

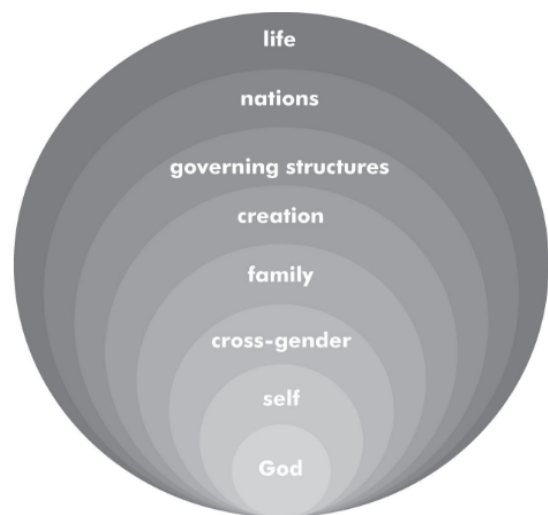
Begin tonight by saying a simple prayer to ask for God's presence as we journey through this book together.

DISCUSSION:

Ask someone to read Genesis 1:1-2:4 aloud.

Have your group members take turns reading aloud from Chapter 2 in *The Very Good Gospel*, the section titled "Indeed it was Very Good" (pg 30-34). Realize the implications of the vision God lays out in Genesis by discussing the bullet points Harper gives us in this section. Then look at the relationship circles below (and on pg 34-35).

- Which of your relationships fan the image of God within you and cultivate the image of God in others? Which ones are characterized by truth telling, mutual respect, justice, grace, love, etc.?
- Which relationships seem to diminish the image of God or cause you to neglect it in others? Which ones are characterized by lies, lack of reciprocity, disrespect, anxiety, shame, fear, etc.?



RESOURCES

Misused Scripture 2016
"In the Beginning..."

Misused Scripture 2016
"The Age of Reason"

UPCOMING EVENTS

11/6 - FCQ 2016: Brian McLaren

Visit forefrontnyc.com/calendar-mh for more events

If God intended for all our relationships to be forcefully good then why are we so far from that very good world now? The Bible offers us a story about that. Ask someone to read Genesis 3:1-24 aloud.

The following statement is paraphrased from pages 50-52:

Sin is not about the personal imperfection of the self. Rather, sin is any act that breaks any of the relationships God declared very good in the beginning. In other words, sin breaks shalom. But radical love has the power to overcome sin and provide healing in every corner of our lives and our world.

- Discuss the statement above. Do you believe this? Have you had experiences where love healed a broken relationship in your life or in the life of another?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Guide your group through this prayer, asking them to pray silently.

- Thank God for the very good relationships in your life. They are like light in the darkness. They place boundaries on the pain in life. Whether they are good relationships with your family or with a local school, hospital, branch of government, these good relationships are a blessing. Give thanks.*

- Now meditate on the relationships that have brought the most darkness into your life. Invite Creator God, Elohim, to hover over the deep (the chaos) in those relationships. Invite God to speak light, love, life and hope into your soul concerning those relationships that bring the most pain. Invite God to be with you in the deep as you confront the seas monsters in your life. Invite God to bring clarity, to place boundaries on the pain, and to restore the image of God within you where your inherent dignity and capacity to exercise dominos have been diminished or crushed by encounters with evil.*
 (pg 36)