

Week 3

Is There Really Only One Way to God?

March 7



(~90 minutes needed)

[In this series, we'll be taking an intentional dive into some of the most important questions we can ask as human beings. They have to do with God, our existence, meaning, purpose, suffering, salvation, and more. For your group discussion to flourish, it is paramount that everyone in your life group access the content ahead of time, think through the reflection questions, and consider some of the resources sent out each week. The discussion guides allow time for each person to reflect on the questions, but conversation will go best if people do most of their thinking beforehand.]

Begin with 1-3 minutes of silence and prayer (1-3 minutes)

As you begin your gathering, spend a minute or two together in prayerful silence. Then, after a few moments of quiet centering, have a specified person in the group pray for your time together.

Read this overview (1 minute)

This week, we're reflecting on the question: "Is there really only one way to God?"

There's no doubt that a question like that might conjure up all kinds of feelings, thoughts, and tensions. You might wrestle with questions like...

- If my answer is "yes," doesn't that exclude people of other faiths?
- Isn't it a bit arrogant to think that I know ultimate spiritual reality?
- Doesn't answering "yes" to that question mean I'm negating every other religious group and their beliefs?

The list could go on and on. This week as we think about the question, "Is there really only one way to God," we're going to wrestle with some of those feelings, thoughts, and tensions. And then we're going to look to Scripture to see if we can find some answers.

This is a safe space. Feel free to share openly and honestly about your own struggles with this question.

Personal reflection (10-15 minutes)

Give everyone about 10-15 minutes to sit with God and reflect on the question, "Is there really only one way to God?" Actually have people write out their thoughts on the questions below. *You'll want to have some pens and paper ready for people to jot down any thoughts that they have.*

Have people reflect on the following questions:

- What are your thoughts/feelings about the question, "Is there only one way to God?" How does thinking about that question make you feel?
- What is your answer to that question? How did you arrive at that conclusion?
- How would you answer that question if someone asked you?
- How does your answer to that question impact your everyday living?

Debrief these questions in triads (30 minutes)

Split your group into smaller triads to share their thoughts on the questions above.

Once the personal reflection time is completed, have everyone come back into a large group to share about their triad discussion, to read Scripture, and to debrief the sermon.

Gather as a large group for discussion (30 minutes)

Once you have debriefed your personal reflection time, spend time in the Scripture below and debrief the sermon from this weekend. *There are lots of questions here, so feel free to pick a couple as you see fit to guide the discussion.*

- What were some things from your smaller group discussions that stood out?

(Go around the group and have each person share one thing that stood out to them from their smaller group discussions. Feel free to ask follow-up questions to people's responses.)

- How did the sermon this past weekend challenge or deepen the way you think about the question, "Is there only one way to God?"
- In this message, Emerson mentioned that a question like "Is there only one way to God?" can conjure up all kinds of other issues. He mentioned that people may think saying "YES" to that question is arrogant or presumptuous or exclusive. Which of those objections challenges your faith the most? How have you wrestled with that objection?
- In this sermon, Emerson explained that arriving at an answer to this question depends on how one views the things Jesus said, the things Jesus did, and the resurrection of Jesus. Do you agree or disagree with that statement? Take a few moments to think of some of the claims and works of Jesus.

For example, you might go through the seven “I AM” statements of Jesus in John’s gospel (see **Jn 6:35; 8:12; 10:9; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1**). Or you might look at instances where Jesus claims oneness with the Father, like in **John 10:30**. Or you might reflect on some of his miracles.

Which claim or work of Jesus resonates most with you personally? Which of these do you think says the most about who Jesus is? What do these claims of Jesus, if true, say about who he is in relation to other faith traditions?

- What would it look like to engage with someone of a different faith background concerning this question? What kinds of things would you want to avoid in having in this kind of conversation? What things would be good to do in a conversation like this to make it successful?
- What new questions did this message or this topic raise for you?
- What is one key takeaway from tonight’s conversation that you need to do or think more about?

Finish with prayer (10 minutes)

Like each week, finish your group session with prayer. You might designate someone in your group to write down everyone’s prayer requests and then send them to the whole group for everyone to be praying about through the week.

- What is on your heart that you need prayer for?
- Who in your life needs prayer?

Have someone close your time together by interceding for the requests that were shared.