

#001 KeyVerse series: Discovering God

- 7 weeks of verses for those seeking God

(all verses NLT)

KeyVerses are designed to help the Curious learn truths about God, day after day. There are 35 verses, allowing a DiscipleMaker to send 5 a week for 7 weeks. The goal is not to give answers but to prompt questions, *is there a God? What is he like, if so?* The 1st series, #001, is below. (The second series, #002 Understanding Jesus, a sequel to #001. A third series, #003 Coming to Jesus, helps a seeker know the way to repentance towards God and faith in Jesus).

35 KeyVerses to help someone discover God

Week 1

Day 1 - Gen 1.1

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: **In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1.1)** The first book in the Bible is called *Beginnings* (that's what "Genesis" means). How fascinating, the first sentence starts by saying God exists. Even before there's a universe, *in the beginning, God!* Lots of people don't believe there is a God, (name). But the Bible doesn't argue, it just starts with, *God's real!* In the rest of the book, we'll get to know what God's like and what he does. Today you can think about this: God is real.

Day 2 - Gen. 1.26

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: **Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They'll reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground." (Genesis 1.26)** The story of creation in *Beginnings* is more poetry than science. It wants to affect us with emotion and wonder. Wow! After everything else gets created, humans appear. At the top. Us! These humans - like you and me - are in charge of everything else. Their job? To care for the planet.

Hmmm, (name)... We've really messed up! What does God think about that? Let's find out.

Day 3 - Gen 1.27

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: **So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1.27)** God designed us *in his image*, the Bible says. Let's brainstorm what could that mean. Imagination? Creativity? Emotions? Having friendships? If we're created *male and female*... what's that got to do with God's image? Hmmm... If God created us, we humans must be unique. You are, (name)!

Day 4 - Gen. 3.23

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: **So the LORD God banished them [Adam and Eve] from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. (Genesis 3.23)** It's shocking to discover in *Beginnings* how quickly the story becomes a tragedy. The connection the first humans had with God is shattered! They get kicked out of the Garden because they rebelled against God (you can read the full story in Genesis 3 if you want). Now they're on their own trying to do life together without God. We are too, (name). When you realize this, the mess of our planet starts to make sense. We made our own troubles because we refused God's help.

Day 5 - Ps. 8.3-4

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: **[talking to God] When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers— the moon and the stars you set in place—what are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them? (Psalm 8.3-4)** Ever ask, *how come I'm alive?* Maybe we all do, (name). If you want to feel seriously unimportant, step outside at night and gaze up at the stars. *They're so immense, I'm so... so nothing!* If God exists, why would he pay any attention to you? Let's find out! (One reason: he loves us. Loves you!)

Week 2

Day 6 - Eccl. 2.11

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: *But as I looked at everything I'd worked so hard to accomplish, it was all so meaningless—like chasing the wind. There was nothing really worthwhile anywhere. (Ecclesiastes 2.11)* Sounds like someone suicidal, right. Actually, it's not. A brilliant man is trying to make sense of his world. But he can't. All his riches, his accomplishments... they're so empty. What about us? if you and I put life together without God, could this be the result, (name)? Will we find it's all hollow at the core? King Solomon, as wise as he was, thought so. And you...?

Day 7 - Eccl. 9.3

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: *It seems so tragic that everyone under the sun suffers the same fate. That's why people aren't more careful to be good. Instead, they choose their own mad course, for they have no hope. There's nothing ahead but death anyway. (Ecclesiastes 9.3)* There's a craziness to life, (name) - have you seen? Nations do crazy things. People too. I have! Sometimes we're impulsive, sometimes foolish. We even risk death! Could it be we realize we'll not get off this planet alive? For sure if you have no hope, if death is staring you down, it's easy to act crazy. *It doesn't matter, so who cares!* It's crazy thinking, but how to change it?

Day 8 - Eccl. 9.11

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: *I've observed something else under the sun. The fastest runner doesn't always win the race, and the strongest warrior doesn't always win the battle. The wise sometimes go hungry, and the skillful aren't necessarily wealthy. And those who are educated don't always lead successful lives. It's all decided by chance, by being in the right place at the right time. (Ecclesiastes 9.11)* It's not fair! We said that to our parents as children, maybe as adults we still feel the same. *Life's not fair.* It's one of the great puzzles of life, how things just happen by chance. Is there any way to win, if it's all luck? And does

faith in God help, when life is such a gamble? It's not easy to get simple answers, (name). Could it be we'll find the answer in God? Let's see...

Theme: the existence and nature of God

Day 9- Acts 17.24-25

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: He's the God who made the world and everything in it. Since he is Lord of heaven and earth, he doesn't live in man-made temples, and human hands can't serve his needs—for he has no needs. He himself gives life and breath to everything, and he satisfies every need. (Acts 17.24-25) Here's a sobering thought, (name). God doesn't need you. Doesn't need me. Not at all! He needs nothing He's complete. So if he's not lonely, not bored, not poor... why did he *give life and breath* to us? What did he make us for, if he doesn't need us? That's worth searching out.

Day 10 - Eccl. 11.5

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: Just as you can't understand the path of the wind or the mystery of a tiny baby growing in its mother's womb, so you can't understand the activity of God, who does all things. (Ecclesiastes 11.5) As you start seeking God, you suddenly realize you can't figure him out, can't find him. Not on your own, (name). If you're serious about this search to find God, it might be good to stop now and ask, *God, if you are real, would you help me find you and figure you out?*

Week 3

Day 11 - Rom 1.20

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. (The Bible, Romans 1.20) This might shock you, (name). The Bible doesn't sympathize with those who say, *I don't know if God*

is real. The answer? *Look around! See how complicated and well-designed nature is! Of course God exists!* Imagine looking at a Rembrandt painting and wondering, *did this work of art happen because of an explosion in a paint factory?"* That's crazy to say. We know someone had to paint it. Same with nature around us. There's no excuse for saying it just happened by chance. God did it.

Day 12 - Ps. 14.1

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: *Only fools say in their hearts, "There is no God." (The Bible, Psalm 14.1a)* Being a fool can be very risky. If someone foolishly drives drunk, how dangerous! If a person ignores gravity, they can fall to their death! No one likes being called a fool. But if I closed my eyes and kept saying *there's no such thing as the sun!*, at some point, you'd say, *you're such a fool!* Same for us, (name), if we keep saying, *For sure, there's no God.* God warns us, only fools talk that way. It's dangerous if we keep thinking it.

Theme: the relationship between God and us

Day 13 - Acts 17.26

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: *From one man he created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries. (The Bible Acts 17.26)* People mostly think they just arrived on the scene and got born Chinese or Russian or some other ethnic group. God says, no, he planned it. He even planned that we'd live in this century. God's had a lot more to do with our circumstances than we realize. That should make us stop and wonder, (name). *Why did God let me get born? What's his purpose in making me "me"?*

Day 14 - Acts 17.27-28a

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: *His [God's] purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us. For in him we live and move and exist. (The Bible Acts 17.27-28a)* If you asked a hundred people what the purpose of life is, how many

would answer, *to seek after God and find him*. Maybe none, (name)! The Bible says that's the purpose you and I are on the planet, (name), but we don't know. How come we don't? Did someone trick us, lie to us about why we're here? Did we trick ourselves? How could we miss the most important thing about life? Sobering to ask...

Day 15 - Heb 4.13

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: *Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he's the one to whom we're accountable. (The Bible, Hebrews 4.13)* No one likes to discover God's watching them, (name). Even more sobering, to learn God knows everything everyone does. And to realize each of us will answer for what we do and say and think... ouch! Maybe that's why people say there's no God. They don't want there to be a God that sees and knows everything. They'd rather live as they wish, with no consequences. A thought: if there's a God who watches everything, wouldn't it be smarter for us to find out how to get him on our side?

Week 4

Day 16 - Job 3.11

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: *God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He's planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people can't see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end. (The Bible, Ecclesiastes 3.11)* You have a heartache for eternity, (name) – have you noticed? When you see something beautiful, hear stirring music, experience ecstasy, you get an ache inside. Why? Because God planted a desire deep within you to live forever. That's why we all get dissatisfied with life, it's going to end. Only God can satisfy this longing he put in us, because only he can give eternal life. That's another great reason to search for him.

Day 17 - Matt. 5.48

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: [Jesus] But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect. (The Bible, Matthew 5.48) *If there is a God, what does he expect of me?* That's an important question, (name). At school, you want to know what the teacher expects. Same with a job, we ask, *What does my boss expect of me?* Jesus told us what God expects: perfection! In words, in thoughts, in reactions to others, in actions, we're to be exactly like God made us. Exactly like Jesus was. *That's impossible*, we respond. *It's not fair, no one can live like that!* That's the great dilemma you and I face. God made us to be perfect, to be like Jesus, and we're not.

Day 18 - Acts 14.16-17

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: In the past he [God] permitted all the nations to go their own ways, but he never left them without evidence of himself and his goodness. For instance, he sends you rain and good crops and gives you food and joyful hearts. (The Bible, Acts 14.16-17) God does many kind things for us but sadly, we rarely notice or say thanks. One way to start responding to God is to think of ways you've been blessed, (name) and tell God, *Thank you*.

Day 19 - Eccl. 11.9

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: Young people, it's wonderful to be young! Enjoy every minute of it. Do everything you want to do; take it all in. But remember that you must give an account to God for everything you do. (The Bible, Ecclesiastes 11.9) The first part of this advice is great: *do everything, enjoy it all!* This is how all of us think when we're young. However, the second part sobers us. Our life is on loan from God. Some day he's going to ask how we lived it. That's an appointment we can't cancel. How can you get ready for that encounter with God when you meet up with him, (name)? Someone came from God with the answer, if you're interested.

Theme: God-substitutes (idols) we put in our life

Day 20 - Eccl. 12.1

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: Don't let the excitement of youth cause you to forget your Creator. Honor him in your youth before you grow old and say, "Life is not pleasant anymore." (The Bible, Ecclesiastes 12.1) Sadly, this comes true for many seniors – life's not pleasant at all. Maybe they have regrets because of past decisions. Or they're full of disappointment and anger. They might want more adventure, but they can't. Many old people are bored and lonely. It doesn't have to be like this, (name). If you link up with God right now when you're young, he'll guide you through life, including old age.

Week 5

Day 21 - Isaiah 40.18-19

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: To whom can you compare God? What image can you find to resemble him? Can he be compared to an idol formed in a mold, overlaid with gold, and decorated with silver chains? (The Bible, Isaiah 40.18-19) If God exists, what's he like? The answer is fascinating, (name). Nothing! God's like nothing we know, nothing we've seen, like nothing in the universe. We can't claim God's like a mountain or even a galaxy. No, God's unique. That's why God is furious with those who make an idol like a Buddha and worship it. He's not like that! That's why it angers him when people say, "There's no God." They've reduced him to nothing, when he's greater than everything. There's nothing, there's no one like him... except Someone. Can you guess who?

Day 22 - Exodus 20.2-4

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: I am the Lord your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery. You must not have any other god but me. You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. (The Bible, Exodus 20.2-4) What does God want, (name)? After he rescued the Jews from Egypt, he told them to stop worshipping other gods and be loyal to him. Today God says be loyal to Jesus and

follow him. Many people respond, *No, I won't! I'm God!* because they want to run their own life. It's a choice. God or me? Each of us must decide.

Day 23 - Eccl. 5.10-11

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: *Those who love money will never have enough. How meaningless to think that wealth brings true happiness! The more you have, the more people come to help you spend it. So what good is wealth—except perhaps to watch it slip through your fingers! (The Bible, Ecclesiastes 5.10-11)* Here's a serious reason people don't pay attention to God: money. They look to money to make them happy, with the attitude, Hey, who needs God! Or they search for money and forget to search for God. Not very smart, (name). Know why? Money doesn't bring happiness - God's blunt assessment - and it doesn't last. Here's an uncomfortable question to ask: *Just how smart am I? Am I pursuing God, or money?*

Day 24 - Eph 4.17-18

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: *With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles [non-believers] do, for they're hopelessly confused. Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they've closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. (The Bible, Ephesians 4.17-18)* Ever wonder what others really think about you? We all do, (name). We often worry about it too. Here's what God thinks about us: we're confused and in the dark. Our minds are closed, our hearts hard. Wow! If he's right, we really need help, because we need to change, and he's the only one who can change us.

Theme: death that comes to all

Day 25 - Eccl. 2.16

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: *For the wise and the foolish both die. The wise will not be remembered any longer than the fool. In the days to come, both will be forgotten. (The Bible, Ecclesiastes 2.16)* We don't like to talk about it, rarely think about it, (name). Death. Not in general, but personal. Your death, my

death. If we're smart, we'd be asking, *after death, what then?* It's impossible to get an true answer, unless someone returned from the dead, but that's impossible too. Oh, Someone did!!! Do you know this?

Week 6

Day 26 - Eccl. 6.12

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: *In the few days of our meaningless lives, who knows how our days can best be spent? Our lives are like a shadow. Who can tell what will happen on this earth after we're gone? (The Bible, Ecclesiastes 6.12)* I want to make a difference, (name), and I imagine you do too. I don't want to live till I'm ninety but waste it all. Who's to tell us what the good life is, a life that makes a difference? Jesus, that's who. He made the most difference in history, although he wasn't rich, wasn't powerful, wasn't handsome. He's influenced the whole world. It makes sense for us to pay attention to him, if we want to make a difference.

Theme: sin and the separation from God

Day 27 - Eccl. 7.20

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: *Not a single person on earth is always good and never sins. (The Bible, Ecclesiastes 7.20)* We like to say, *I'm pretty good*. That's normal for all of us. But what if pretty good isn't good enough? You'd not want to have a pretty good surgeon operating on you, yikes! A guitar player wouldn't be satisfied with a pretty good tuned guitar. What if God's not satisfied with *pretty good*? What if he expects perfect? Then we're all in trouble, (name)! Can you see now why Jesus had to come? He's perfect, and made the perfect way back to God. We really need his help!

Day 28 - Rom 3.23 used in #3 KeySeries (with v. 24)

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: *For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. (The Bible, Romans 3.23)* Imagine writing an exam that

everyone flunked. Not just the lazy or dumb ones, but everyone. That's what this verse means, (name), none of us measures up to God's expectations of what "human" should be. If God hadn't send Jesus, if he hadn't given us a new way to God, we'd all be throw-aways. How sobering! If not for Jesus, we've flunked life. You can see why people admit, *Jesus, I really, really need you!*

Day 29 - Ecc. 7.29

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: **But I did find this: God created people to be virtuous, but they've each turned to follow their own downward path.**" (The Bible, Ecclesiastes 7.29) The important question's not, *is there a God?* but, *why does God seem so far away?* The answer is, we moved, (name). You did, I did. All of us turned from God because we wanted to follow our own path. It's a downhill slope, so we go faster and faster away from him. Now we're far away, and the path back is too steep. This is why Jesus came - only he lived the virtuous life, only he never turned away. He's the way to bring us back to God.

Theme: becoming a Seeker

Day 30 - Isaiah 55.6-7

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: **Seek the Lord while you can find him. Call on him now while he's near. Let the wicked change their ways and banish the very thought of doing wrong. Let them turn to the Lord that he may have mercy on them. Yes, turn to our God, for he'll forgive generously.** (The Bible, Isaiah 55.6-7) People often think, *Someday I'll get around to thinking about God. Maybe later.* No. Waiting is risky. That's God's warning to us. When is it too late to look for him? None of us knows. I encourage you to tell God now, not later, *I want to find you! Please come near me!* Tell him if he reveals himself to you, you'll open up to him. You'll change. You'll ask for forgiveness. Don't wait, (name).

Week 7

Day 31 - Jer. 29.13-14a

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: **If you look for me wholeheartedly, you'll find me. I will be found by you,"** says the LORD. (The Bible, Jeremiah 29.13-14a) Why do so many people miss God? They're not really looking. Not really serious. It makes no sense to them, to find God. They think something else is more important. I hope you're different, (name). God's making you a definite promise: if you look for him, you'll find him. That's a good promise to test out! I hope you do.

Day 32 - Acts 17.30-31

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: **God overlooked people's ignorance about these things in earlier times, but now he commands everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and turn to him. For he has set a day for judging the world with justice by the man he has appointed [Jesus], and he proved to everyone who this is by raising him from the dead."** (The Bible, Acts 17.30-31) Once we decide God really exists, the smart question is, *What does God expect of me?* A complete turnaround. No longer living for ourselves. Repentance. It's like making a U-turn, (name). When you're driving the wrong direction, admit it. *So stupid, I'm going the wrong way!* But do more. Turn the car around! With cars it's easy, with people, it's hard. Why? We're stubborn. Plus it must make sense. *If I keep ignoring you, God, what's ahead?* Jesus. He's ahead of us all, the come-alive-again messenger from God. Jesus is God's way back to him, if you'll take it. Or God's Judge ahead, if you don't. What direction makes most sense to you?

Day 33 - John 4.23

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: **But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way.** (The Bible, John 4.23) Here's where our search for God arrives at. There really is a God. We know this because of Jesus. This God made everything, made you, made me. Which means... what? We must stop pretending God doesn't exist. He does! Stop pretending he's

unimportant. He's totally important! Yes, there's God, Carrie. Once you stop and admit it, and turn around, you'll see something amazing. He's pursuing you! That's the story of Jesus, God comes looking for you! He invites you to love and worship him, gives you this choice. *Will I be honest and open to you, God? Will I give you first place in my life?* I can help you with that choice, but not make it for you.

Theme: The gospel

Day 34 - Acts 10.34-35

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: **Then Peter replied, "I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism. In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right. (The Bible, Acts 10.34-35)** The best kinds of stories are romance/rescue stories - I think so anyway! No matter how much trouble the characters are in, you know the hero will show up and save the day. Why? Sheer love. That's us - sinners, helpless. And the hero. Jesus. Awesome love. With this twist, (name): the hero in our story dies. Sacrifices his life. We can push away or walk away from such love. You can. Or we can run to him and get rescued. You can! To Jesus.

Day 35 - Eph 2.8-9

A KeyVerse to help you discover God: **God gave Jesus of Nazareth the Holy Spirit and power. He went around doing good and healing all who were troubled by the devil because God was with Him. We've seen and heard everything He did in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. And yet they killed Him by nailing Him to a cross. God raised Him to life on the third day and made Him to be seen. (Acts 10.38-40)** Your search for God isn't just philosophical, btw. It plunges you into the Jesus-story, different from any you've ever known. A story of extremes: power and compassion, hatred and violence. A brutal killing to end it all. But that's not the end! Here's the most amazing twist: death gets reversed, Jesus comes alive! Does that have anything to do with you, (name)? Yes, you'll discover, if you keep searching.

Followup: Thanks for letting me send you these KeyVerses, (name). I hope they helped you learn more about God. You might be wondering, *how does Jesus fit into this? Why do Christians say he's so important to them?* There's another KeyVerse series, *Understanding Jesus*; I'd be glad to send them to you if you're interested. Just let me know, k.

Curious