



Bible study

named by

God

kasey
van norman

overcoming your past, transforming your present, embracing your future

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Named by God Bible Study: Overcoming Your Past, Transforming Your Present, Embracing Your Future

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Part I: Overcoming Your Past

Week 1

DAY 1

Just Born with It

DAY 2

Susceptible to Infection

DAY 3

Royal Mischief

DAY 4

David's Unruly Bunch

DAY 5

When Love and Truth Collide

Week 2

DAY 1

Not for the Faint of Heart

DAY 2

The Whys of Life

DAY 3

Leave the Unknown Alone

DAY 4

The Portal to Power

DAY 5

Access Code

Week 1

Introduction

Recommended Reading From *Named by God*: Introduction, chapters 1–3
Named by God Video Curriculum: DVD Session 1

As followers of Christ, some of us have no idea just how much power we have through Jesus. Here's what we need to understand: who we *are* doesn't determine how we act; who we *think* we are determines how we act. And for so many of us, our thought processes remain tainted by past disappointments, suffering, and hardship.

If we think we are mistakes, we will go through life making mistakes. If we think we are undeserving, we will live defeated lives. If we think we must spend all our time running from our pasts, we will live in a continual state of chaos. And if we think we are only by-products of other people's sin, we will keep choosing sin over the power God offers.

Let me fill you in on a truth about your past: God wants to use it to set the stage for a miracle in your present. Believe me—anyone God has ever raised up in the present had a history of some kind of sin and disappointment in his or her past.

When God comes to Moses in Exodus 3 and a bush begins to burn with the glory of God, Moses (whose past includes murder) responds with, "Who am I to appear before Pharaoh? Who am I to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt?" (verse 11). When God appears to Isaiah in chapter 6 of the book Isaiah, the prophet's response to God is, "It's all over! I am doomed, for I am a sinful man. I have filthy lips, and I live among a people with filthy lips" (verse 5). In Luke 5:8, when Jesus does a large-scale miracle for his disciples (former fishermen with no real training or prestige), Peter exclaims, "Oh, Lord, please leave me—I'm too much of a sinner to be around you."

These responses are on track—we *should* be increasingly aware of our sin the closer we get to God's holiness. Yes, we are sinful. Yes, we have a past that is filled with sins we've committed against others and sins others have committed against us. Yes, we've disappointed others, and others have disappointed us. We have all fractured the image of God. But . . . (That's one of my favorite words in the Bible—*but*.)

This week we will begin to lay the groundwork for the "but" in your life.

You are unworthy, *but* . . .

You come from a broken home, *but* . . .

You are a sinner, *but* . . .

You have a past, *but* . . .

You have become completely stagnant in your relationship with the Lord, *but* . . .



This week is all about going back before we can move forward—recognizing where we come from so we can think clearly about where we are going. Once we can get our heads on straight about who we are in Christ, we can then begin to live in Christ’s power on a daily basis.

We begin our journey with an overview of who we were at birth, as well as who has influenced us since then. I told you this wasn’t going to be light and fluffy! This week is perhaps one of the most difficult of our journey together, so let’s go in fighting. Commit to following through and being persistent. Be prayerful, accurate, and thorough as you read each passage and complete each exercise. Keep in mind that you only have one audience—this book is between you and God alone. He is the only one who will be checking your answers, and he expects complete openness and honesty. See it through to the end, my friend—and don’t forget we’re in this together.

Group Session 1

(To be completed along with the *Named by God* video curriculum, preferably in a group setting.)

To fully grasp what it means to live as one named by God, it is critical that we start our journey at the beginning—yes, I mean the *literal* beginning. You may think Genesis is simply the story of a fellow named Adam and a gal named Eve, but the truth is, you and I are just as much the main characters as they are.

Our role in this story begins in Genesis 3. If you fail to understand this chapter, nothing in the Bible—or in your life—will make sense.

1. You must understand your adversary for three reasons:

He is _____ than you.

He has more _____ than you.

He is bent on _____ you.

2. First Satan's strategy is to target your freewill hub—your _____ .

The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. But the LORD God warned him, "You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden—except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die." GENESIS 2:15-17

Satan wants you to overlook all of your freedom and focus in on the one restriction.

3. Next, Satan wants to plant a seed of _____ in your mind of God's faithfulness.

4. Third, Satan will direct you to the one lie that has plagued human history since Genesis 3—that you can be your own _____ and not face any consequences—otherwise known as _____ .

- 5. Satan wants to create an atmosphere for you to linger in _____ just long enough for you to sin.**

So what's your fig leaf?

Our sin is the problem. But we can't see that because of our pride.

The man—Adam—named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all who live. And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife. Then the LORD God said, "Look, the human beings have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!" So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made.

GENESIS 3:20-23

- 6. God made our very first parents, Adam and Eve, and we are a _____ of that.**

You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.

COLOSSIANS 2:13-15

Day 1

Just Born with It

No matter who we are or how we grew up, all of humanity has this in common: we're all born as a result of the union of one man and one woman. Each of us has a mother and a father. Whether they are current heroes in your life or you've never seen their faces, the fact remains that you are a genetic product of your parents' union. For some of us, childhood and adolescence were shaped by the two people who match our DNA. Others grew up in an environment with just one person or no one who shares our bloodline.

I would love to spend time unpacking the various backgrounds we might have been raised in. But for the purpose of this study, we will focus on one word to describe the people who have known us "since we were knee high," as my grandfather would say: *family*. Like it or not, if we are going to talk out our pasts, we have to address that tricky topic.

At this point, some of you are breathing a sigh of relief. You're thinking, *Okay, I can handle this. I grew up in a good Christian home. My parents stayed together. I had everything I needed, and I was taught to know God and to walk in his ways.* And to that I say, "Praise God!" As a parent myself, I know how difficult it can be to pray for and direct your children in this dark world. I thank God for the parents who call on him for guidance as they take on the big responsibility of training the next generation. But even if you had a positive childhood experience, I believe you'll benefit from looking into your past.

For others, the very thought of discussing family may sound terrifying. You may be thinking, *What family? My dad left my mom for another woman when I was a kid. My mom had to work three jobs just to provide for us, which left her no time for making supper, let alone offering spiritual guidance. My siblings and I had to take care of ourselves . . . and we still do!*

Wherever you find yourself, I'd like to encourage you to take a moment to pray. Ask God to grant you a very real look at your family—the people who raised you. I want you to think about your childhood, your teenage years, or any season when you relied on someone else to provide for you and protect you. If there are mental roadblocks, simply ask God for a clear, objective picture of your family.

We're going to spend some time thinking about how our families have shaped the people we are. But before we begin, take the opportunity to pray through your upbringing, thanking God for the good parts and asking him to redeem the broken ones.

- 1. Think of three significant events from your past that have influenced who you are today. What would it look like for God to redeem those situations? It's just you and the Lord right now—allow him to reveal these truths to you.**

- 2. Okay, you got it? Now fill in the following information to the best of your ability.**

Your name (given at birth)

Biological father's name (if known)

Biological mother's name (if known)

Father figure's name (if different from above)

Mother figure's name (if different from above)

List siblings or other family members (if any) who lived with you at any time in your household.

Now, this next step may take a little effort, especially if your childhood came with its set of challenges. But hang in there and trust God to give you revelation and to be there with you.

I don't know about you, but in my home we collect a *lot* of trash. Dirty diapers, uneaten food, credit card applications—you name it! Once my husband takes the trash to the curb, though, I forget about it—out of sight, out of mind. But guess what? The guys who get paid to pick it up and haul it away from my house don't forget about it. They have to remember, or else it will build up on my front lawn in a smelly, nasty pile of filth.

So this is my challenge to you today. We don't need to wallow in or get buried by our trash, but we can't just ignore it. We have to sort through it to find what we need to get rid of and what we need to keep. We can't just put it outside and forget about it—we have to allow God to deal with it for good.

Come on—let’s dig together.

Now we are going to gather a bit more information about the people we listed. In the next section I have designated a place for mother, father, and siblings. Under each heading, I want you to think of at least three traits—positive and negative—that this person possessed. Whether that characteristic made a direct impact on your life or not, write down what you are able to remember. These traits can be personality attributes, behaviors, or lifestyle patterns. Do your best to keep your emotions out of it; try to be as factual as possible. If any recollection is a bit fuzzy, don’t write it down. To get you started, I have shared a few of my own family memories.

Mother (or Mother Figure)

Positive traits:

Put my siblings and me first; supported us in everything we did; loved the Lord

Negative traits:

Divorced my father; struggled with her sense of self-worth; carried a lot of guilt

Father (or Father Figure)

Positive traits:

Hard worker; dependable; enjoyed keeping things clean and functioning well

Negative traits:

Workaholic; struggled to display his love; struggled with losing his temper

Now it’s your turn.

Mother (or Mother Figure)

Positive traits:

Negative traits:

Father (or Father Figure)

Positive traits:

Negative traits:

Siblings (or Others Present in Your Home)

Name:

Positive traits:

Negative traits:

Name:

Positive traits:

Negative traits:

Name:

Positive traits:

Negative traits:

3. Look back at your lists. How have traits and behaviors of your family members (both positive and negative) impacted the choices you've made and continue to make in your life?

4. In what ways do you blame your family members for the person you've become?

5. In what ways do you credit your family members for the person you've become?

6. Read Psalm 51:5. From what point were you considered sinful?

7. Now read Ephesians 2:1-3. This is Paul's picture of one who has yet to come to faith in Christ—a lost sinner! You see, people who are outside a relationship with Jesus are dead spiritually; they are unable to recognize and respond to spiritual things. Not only are these people dead on the inside, but they are also enslaved by Satan and the enticements of this world. Everyone is born with a bent toward evil.

Complete this portion of verse 3: "All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful _____," or "gratifying the cravings of our _____" (NIV).

As we look to our family members and the traits that have impacted who we are today, we must understand our personal nature upon arriving into the human family. No matter who we were born to or how they raised us, the very nature we were born with is corrupted.

I know this may sound harsh, but it's true.

8. Read Romans 5:14.

This verse states that Adam is a _____ of the one to come.

9. Now read Romans 5:15-19.

Meditate for a moment on verse 18, and let's end our day together in prayer. Perhaps you might pray something like this:

Father, I know that because of Adam and Eve's sin, all humanity is condemned and bent toward evil from birth. I know that I, too, would have disobeyed you just as they did had I been in the Garden that day with the serpent. I praise you, Lord, that although Adam's sin plunged the human race into death, we are freely offered salvation and life through your Son, Jesus! Thank you that, although my past is marked by the sins of my family as I grew up—and by my own sin—in your grace and mercy you have seen fit to rescue me. Thank you for moving me forward into a life of victory over the grave and freedom from all sinful cravings and addictions. Thank you for my parents and family members, despite their shortcomings and failures. Help me to see you clearly through the love of those who surrounded me. I give you the glory for the lessons you've taught me through them along the way. In Jesus' name, amen.