

STUDY GUIDE

SIX SESSIONS

Yes,  
& No,  
Maybe

Living with the God of Immeasurably More

Wendy Pope

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DAVID  COOK™

*transforming lives together*

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## Session 1

# Yes to God: What Does Yes Mean?

### PRAYER

Let someone pray for the beginning of your *Yes, No, and Maybe* adventure together.

### CONNECT QUESTION

What was one request you were happy to say “yes” to recently?

### KEY VERSE

“You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness” (Rom. 6:18).

## BIBLE READING

Romans 6:16–18

## 4NM READING

Introduction and chapter 1

## VIDEO LISTENING GUIDE

Our experience with the immeasurably more God starts with a yes from the heart.

Yes means \_\_\_\_\_ to God, rather than to our own wants and wishes.

We say yes to His \_\_\_\_\_, rather than leaning on our own thoughts, education, and intellect.

We say yes to His \_\_\_\_\_, rather than our own sinful nature.

**Life with the God of immeasurably more starts when we allow yes to cultivate trust and no to invite revelation, so maybe can welcome freedom.**

## SESSION 1 NOTES

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## SESSION 1 DISCUSSION

A few years ago, my son got caught up in the *Walking Dead* craze. The television show is based on a comic book series that tells the story of life after a zombie apocalypse. The survivors interact with zombies—will-less and speechless human characters who have died and been supernaturally reanimated—while trying to find a safe and secure place to live. It’s a little too gruesome for my taste, but to a teenage boy it screams “Cool.”

But I found myself wondering, could it be we have more in common with the walking dead than we think?

While it’s not a perfect analogy, before Christ, all of us—me, you, and even people in the Bible, like Saul—were the walking dead. We were spiritually dead. *Spiritually dead* means being separated from God by sin. We walked around among the living, unable to speak or understand matters of the Spirit, looking for a safe and secure place to be. The divide between God and the human race caused by sin was closed by the grace of God through the sacrificial death of His Son, Jesus. Now, those who trust Jesus as their Savior are truly alive, with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, walking in the security of our heavenly home, able to speak and understand spiritual matters. However, we, much like the early believers, live with the constant threat of an enemy—Satan—who hates us and God.

Saul (later called Paul) had hate in his heart and aimed to kill Christians near and far. He was a rising leader among the Jews, and he saw Christianity as a threat to Judaism. We’re introduced to him as a man who was “breathing out murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples” (Acts 9:1). This ruthless persecutor set out on

another mission of murder, having no idea that *he* was a dead man walking. That is, until Jesus stepped onto the scene.

Only a radical encounter with God could change a man who reviled Christianity into a man who felt like this: “For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again *even with tears*, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ” (Phil. 3:18). Such a drastic change in someone’s heart and trajectory of life can only be attributed to salvation. Salvation is a one-time act that compels us into a lifetime of action. Thankfully, we have God to help us every step of the way.

1. Spend a moment reflecting on a time when you became aware of a desire to take a step of faith. For those of you who have already accepted Christ as your Savior, think about the day of your salvation. Where were you and who was there?

The experience of salvation is the beginning of a lifetime adventure with the creator of the universe through the person of the Holy Spirit. Jesus saved us, and the Holy Spirit seeks to sanctify us. *Sanctify* is a church word you may or may not have heard before. *Sanctify* means “to be set apart or made holy.” Simply put, we can define *sanctification* as the state in which we become like Christ, to



be used by Christ, for the glory of Christ. On our Damascus Road experience—like Paul’s—Jesus gives us new life. Then, in this life, His Spirit helps us to override our sinful nature and overcome our past, so we can be holy as He is holy.

## OVERRIDING OUR SINFUL NATURE

Read Ephesians 2:1–9. Keep your Bible open to Ephesians 2.

2. What does verse 1 say you were? What does verse 5 say God made us?

Compare those two words: *dead* and *alive*. It makes sense that the word *dead* in the Greek would mean “what lacks life,” but take a look at the word *alive*. The word *alive* is part of a compound Greek expression that means “made us alive together.” The word that translates as this phrase is made up of two root words: *syn* (soon), which means “joined close-together in tight identification,”<sup>1</sup> and *zōopoiéō* (dzo-op-oy-eh’-o), which “is particularly used of God *infusing His life in the believer*.”<sup>2</sup> You can’t get more opposite than that! We were the walking dead, but now we are infused with Christ. Wowsers! Don’t you just love studying God’s Word?

Adam's sin in the Garden separating us from God = dead. Jesus's sacrifice on the cross opening the door for unity with God = alive. Salvation is the free gift of God that rescues us from the power of sin. It takes us from death to life, old to new, what *was* to what *will be*. Such good news seems too good to be true, doesn't it? Maybe you're wondering why God would want to do this.

Many times, I read the Bible and encounter what I call an aha! word that explains the who and why behind the what. The aha! word in this passage is "in order" (okay, that's two words). It tells us a key reason why God joined His Son's life with ours (through salvation) to bring us from the dead into new life.

And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. (vv. 6–7)

It truly is all about God. On our own, you and I don't have the ability to bring ourselves to life, redeem our past, or forgive our sins. But God does, and He does so for His glory and our good.

3. Express what it means to you to be alive in Christ.

The impact of Jesus's one-time sacrifice is news worth celebrating, and the fact that it's a gift—well, that's just icing on the celebration cake. “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8). Because of Jesus, we are alive—no longer the walking dead—and free from the penalty of our sin and the pain of our past.

## OVERCOMING THE PAST

Is there something you wish you had never done? Words you'd do anything to take back? For years after truly surrendering my life to this adventure with Christ, the “If Only” song was stuck in my head on auto-play. Over and over the popular chorus, “Woulda, Coulda, Shoulda,” boomed in a minor key to unearth buried feelings of regret, reminding me of what I had spent years trying to forget. Maybe you have experienced the same rumble.

I wasn't a bad person. I mean, I didn't do outright unkind things directly in the face of others, but on this side of my younger years, through the lens of redeemed eyes, I clearly see my heart. It was selfish, prideful, critical, and judgmental: a heart unaffected by my actions and unchanged by my salvation. Over time, the Spirit's work in my life led to confession of my past sin, and the grief of my behavior and attitude was replaced with peace and prepared me for the calling on my life.

Don't you know our friend Paul had lots of regrets? The torture, imprisonment, and murder of followers of the God who rescued him from hell had to be painful images for him to carry. Surely, the memory of hearing the screams of the innocent and holding the

coats of the murderers haunted Paul. He needed time for the Spirit to teach and train him also.

After Paul's roadside conversion, he spent time in Arabia (Gal. 1:17). Many scholars believe that he used this season (possibly as long as three years) to learn and prepare for public ministry. You see, though Paul's conversion was immediate on the road to Damascus, he still had work to do before he would be ready to step out to preach and teach. Salvation is a miraculous thing, but it doesn't immediately erase the effects of our past.

4. Read 1 Timothy 1:15–16. What did Paul call himself?

5. Did Paul sound defeated or allow his past to keep him from living the immeasurably more life? (See v. 16.) Should we?

6. How did God use Paul's past for his good and God's glory? Is there anything from your past that has kept you from living the immeasurably more life? How could this be used for God's glory?

Without a doubt, who you were before you accepted Christ shapes who you are afterward. Here's the cool thing: God accepts the good, bad, and ugly of our past and creates a beautiful new creation. One of the most encouraging truths in God's Word about getting past our past is 2 Corinthians 5:17. I'm a fan of all Bible translations and love how this verse is rendered in the *Amplified Bible, Classic Edition*. For fun, I included the *New International Version* as well.

Therefore, if any person is [ingrafted] in Christ (the Messiah) he is a new creation (a new creature altogether); the old [previous moral and spiritual condition] has passed away. Behold, the fresh and new has come! (AMPC)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

I should have warned you, this news might cause you to spontaneously shout “Hallelujah” or shrill with delight. Take it all in. *The old [previous moral and spiritual condition] is passed away—gone.* We should not waste time remembering what God has forgotten.

Saul determined to be known as *Paul*, his other name, which means “small.” He recognized that his experience on the road with Jesus had changed him, and he embraced his status of being a new creation. Below is a New Creation Name Chart. We can shed our past and take hold of our new identity in Christ because of who God is.

### *New Creation Name Chart*

<b>Because God Is</b>	<b>I Am No Longer</b>	<b>I Am</b>
Grace (Eph. 2:8)	Guilty	Forgiven
Just (Rom. 3)	A Failure	Redeemed
Holy (Isa. 1:18; John 1:29)	Shameful	Holy
Merciful (Ps. 145:8)	Cursed	Blessed
Loving (John. 15:16; 1 Peter 2:9)	Unwanted	Chosen
Redeeming (Gal. 4–5)	Guilty	Blameless
Good (Rom. 8:14–17; 1 Peter 1:3)	Abandoned	Adopted
Kind (Titus 3:4–8)	A Beggar	An Heir

Oh, the wondrous love of God, to sacrifice His Son so we might have a new life—a life that’s immeasurably more than we could think or ask! “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us” (Eph. 3:20). Jesus did the dying so we might live,

so let's cooperate with His Spirit's work so that we might live fully the life He died to give.

We'll close our lesson with a great moving-on verse. It's marked in my Bible to help me remember a significant time in my life when I had to trust God to do a *new thing* in my life, and in the lives of dear friends. He has been faithful to fulfill this verse in immeasurable ways, and I know He will fulfill it for you as well. This one is worth memorizing, highlighting, and hanging on our bathroom mirror.

7. Write out Isaiah 43:18–19 in this space. Then, with your pencil or pen, black out the things we are not supposed to remember or not think about. Circle what God says He is doing.

See you next week, friends! I love doing Bible study with you.

**ON YOUR OWN ... IF YOU WANT TO**

Go back and look up the verses in our New Creation Name Chart. Ask God to help you add to the chart.

## SAY YES TO GOD

Share your Damascus Road experience with someone this week. And if you haven't had one yet, ask a Christian you know to tell you about their story.

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