



## The Pentateuch (Old Testament Overview 1)

This Small Group Guide is designed to help you use the Silo Pentateuch course in a small group or Bible study setting. Silo courses work well for small group study, but you may need some guidance with the logistics. This Guide breaks the Pentateuch course into six weekly sessions, gives assigned Bible reading for each week, and provides discussion questions to work through during your weekly meeting.

### Getting Everyone Signed Up

To begin, make sure everyone in your group registers for the Silo Pentateuch course (start at [thesiloproject.org](http://thesiloproject.org)). While each group member could be registered in the Self-Paced Open Registration Course, we recommend that you set up your own Group Class. Not only does this give each member a discount, it also enables your group to see any comments that other members make online.

To set up a Group Class, your small group leader should register first and choose the "Create Your Own Group Class" option during registration. Your leader will then enter the email addresses of the remaining group members, which will invite them to register for that specific Group Class. Once everyone is registered, you are ready to begin.

### Structuring Your Weekly Meetings

You have two major options for how to handle the course material during your group meetings:

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#### Option 1: Watch at Home, Discuss Together

If you choose this option, each group member will read the assigned Bible passages and watch the assigned course sessions online prior to the weekly meeting. Your group meetings would then consist of discussing the questions provided in this guide based on the material they watched and the Scriptures they read. Your group can also begin discussing the material online through the Silo discussion questions, but you'll also want them to discuss the material during your weekly meetings.

#### Option 2: Watch & Discuss Together

If you choose this option, each group member will read the assigned Bible passages prior to the weekly meetings, then gather to watch the assigned course sessions during the weekly meeting. If this sounds like the best option for your group, be sure to meet somewhere with a solid internet connection, and access the course sessions by signing in through one of your group members' accounts during your meeting. You can then discuss the questions provided in this guide, and any members who want to review can do so online after the fact.

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Every group has a unique dynamic. Sometimes it's best to begin each week by simply asking your group what stood out to them from the passages they read and videos they watched.

Otherwise, the guide for each of these six weekly sessions should provide a helpful platform for a fruitful discussion.

We recommend sending this Small Group Guide to each member of your group as you begin the class so that everyone knows what to read and can come to the discussion prepared.

### **Leading a Group Discussion**

It can be difficult to lead a discussion for a small group, and every group has a unique dynamic. As the discussion leader, your job will be to guide the group from question to question. Sometimes you'll find a question that no one seems to understand. If you can think of a way to rephrase the question, that may help. If not, you can choose to move on.

Sometimes you may need to push the group to go deeper. Most questions can be answered in a sentence, but healthy discussion digs beneath the surface. If a question gets answer too quickly, you can ask the group to expand or ask them why they gave the answer they did. You might also ask if anyone else agrees, disagrees, or can think of anything to add. Sometimes a little prodding goes a long way toward enriching a discussion.

You will also want to ensure that your group sees the practicality of the topics you are discussing. Theology is important, but God's truth is not meant to be confined to intellectual discussions. It's meant to change our lives. Each session incorporates some practical questions designed to help you apply the truths you will be discussing to your lives. Often this practical element comes at the end of the session, but you may want to start the application portion sooner. Interspersing questions like, "What would this look like if it became a reality in our lives?" or "Does this have any bearing on the way we live day to day?" or "What aspects of our lives (our job, our family time, our outreach, etc.) would need to change if we took this seriously?" can help to bring abstract truths home.

Keep in mind that you don't need all of the answers to participate in or even to lead a discussion like this. We are trying to understand God and his word and to transform our lives and our world with that knowledge. "I don't know" is an excellent answer. There is always room for further study, and often that will be the best approach. But there is no substitute for wrestling with the questions, and doing so with a loving group of Christians will shape each of you as you seek to love and serve Jesus.

## Week 1 – Introduction to the Pentateuch

This week you will discuss some key concepts relating to studying the Old Testament in general and the Pentateuch in particular. (Because the term *Pentateuch* will keep showing up, be sure that everyone in your group understands that this refers to the first five books of the Old Testament—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). After discussing these general concepts, you will discuss Genesis 1 and 2.

- Passages to Read:
  - Genesis 1–2
  
- Sessions to watch:
  - Session 1 – Introduction
  - Session 2 – How to Read the Old Testament
  - Session 3 – Creation (Genesis 1–2)
  
- Questions to Discuss:
  1. Share with the group your experience with the first five books of the Old Testament. Have you read them? Do you like them? Find them difficult? Intentionally avoid them?
  
  2. Share your expectations for this study. What would you like to learn and how would you like to learn based on this study?
  
  3. The “Introduction” video in Session 1 explains the difference between narrative writing and legal writing in the Pentateuch. What is the difference and why is the difference important?

If this question is too broad, try discussing each of these questions:

- What should we expect to find in the narrative sections of the Pentateuch?
- What should we expect to find in the legal sections of the Pentateuch?

4. Why do you think we tend to read the Old Testament morally and see the characters as heroes to emulate?
  
5. What does it mean to take a theological approach to reading the Old Testament?
  
6. Why is it important that we read the Old Testament theologically rather than morally?
  
7. Now that we have covered some of the basics with regard to studying the Old Testament, let's talk about the beginning of Genesis. Based on your reading of Genesis 1, how does it emphasize the transcendence (the surpassing greatness) of God?
  
8. Based on your reading of Genesis 2, how does it emphasize the immanence (the personal nearness) of God?
  
9. Think back over everything you've discussed in this session. How should your everyday life be affected by understanding these truths?
  
10. As a group, spend some time in prayer. Ask God to guide you as you study his word. Pray that this would be more than an academic examination of ancient texts, that you would come to know him better through this study. Thank God for the world he created and for his perfect design in all of it.

## Week 2 – Fall & Redemption

This week you will discuss the fall and Abraham. With the fall, we see sin enter God's good world and mangle God's design for his creation. But immediately after, we see God's plan of redemption come into effect. This plan takes a sharp focus in the person of Abraham, as God makes a promise that he will make Abraham into a great nation and that all of the nations of the world would be blessed through him.

- Passages to Read:
  - Genesis 3
  - Genesis 12:1–9
  - Genesis 15
  - Genesis 17
  
- Sessions to Watch:
  - Session 4 – The Fall (Genesis 3–11)
  - Session 5 – Abraham (Genesis 12–25)
  
- Questions to Discuss:
  1. Think about what you read in Genesis 3. In your own words, explain why the fall of Adam and Eve into sin is such a significant event.
  
  2. How do we see sin affecting the biblical story in Genesis 3–11?
  
  3. The fall is more than a biblical story. It affects every aspect of our experience of the world even today. Take a few minutes to discuss some of the ways that sin and its affects stain our world and our lives today.
  
  4. Read Genesis 3:15. Why is this promise that God makes to Eve so significant?

5. Think back to what you read in Genesis 12, 15, and 17. Explain the covenant that God made with Abraham here. (What does Abraham need to do? What does God promise to do? Etc.)
  
6. What makes this covenant significant, and what elements of Genesis 12, 15, and 17 highlight the significance of this covenant?
  
7. Why is it important to see that God's blessing to Abraham was meant to bless all the nations of the earth (see Gen. 12:1–3)? How should this affect the way we view God's blessings in our own lives?
  
8. Why is it significant that God's covenant with Abraham was unilateral (i.e., that God's promise wasn't dependent on Abraham's response)?
  
9. Think back over everything you've discussed in this session. How should your everyday life be affected by understanding these truths?
  
10. Spend some time in prayer. Be open to confessing your own sin in light of the impact that sin has had on God's good world. Ask God for forgiveness and redemption in light of the destruction that sin has brought upon our world. Thank God for his plan of redemption and ask him to guide and empower you as you seek to play your role in his great plan.

**This is a sample of the small group guide for the Silo Pentateuch course. Other sessions include:**

- Week 3 – Jacob, Joseph, & Judah
- Week 4 – Exodus
- Week 5 – Leviticus
- Week 6 – Numbers & Deuteronomy

To get started with a Silo course for your small group, visit [thesiloproject.org/groups](https://thesiloproject.org/groups).