

Bible Study for Fall 2018

1. How to Succeed in The USA?

Coming to study and live in another country presents many challenges and opportunities. The UAH International Fellowship of Christian University Students (INFOCUS) Student Club helps new and current international students feel welcomed to the UAH campus, participate in social events and trips, learn about the American culture, and meet with adult mentors each week to have group discussions. The group has a faith-based foundation and offers Bible studies to the students as well.

For the discussion tonight, we will consider your goals, some goals for INFOCUS, and which goal you are most interested in pursuing.

1. Definition of Success

What is your idea of success? In the space below, write down one thing that you would like to be successful at in the next year. Write down the name of one person that you think is a successful person.

We will have a volunteer from the audience act out (without words) the thing they would like to be successful at this coming year or one small thing that they have failed at doing. We will try to guess what they are showing us.

What do you want to be when you grow up? In other words, what are your longer-term personal or professional goals?

2. INFOCUS Goals

Here are several goals that we have for the INFOCUS students

- a. Provide assistance with practical matters such as providing a chance to win a bicycle to ride on campus or a meal before our meetings.
- b. Discuss the Bible and how it has shaped portions of the American culture so I can understand the teachings of Jesus and the people around me in Huntsville.
- c. Assist students in building relationships with other students in order feel more at home at UAH.
- d. Assist students in building relationships with faculty and other members of the Huntsville community.
- e. Provide outings, field trips, or parties to meet new people, see new things, have fun, and have a break from studying.
- f. Visit American homes to learn more about the culture or holiday traditions.
- g. Get connected with a local family to have someone off campus who I can become friends with.
- h. Mentor students in leadership skills that will help them be successful in their future careers.
- i. Have people who pray for me and the concerns that I have.

Select two or three of these that are consistent with your goals.

3. INFOCUS Constitution **Constitution of InFOCUS**

Article I Name

The name of the organization shall be known as InFOCUS (International Fellowship of Christian University Students).

Article II Purpose

The Purpose of the InFOCUS is to serve international students and the greater UAH community in a physical, cultural, and spiritual manner.

Article III Membership

Section 1. Membership to this organization is open to any student attending classes at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. The major beliefs of this organization are based upon the teachings of God and Jesus Christ as recorded in Bible. The core motivating belief for this group is that Jesus Christ is the son of God who

came into this world to save people from the effects of their sins. A practical outworking of this belief is the desire to show the love of Christ in a practical manner to all UAH students especially those students whose culture and background are significantly different from the typical or traditional UAH student. Section 2. There shall be no discrimination based on religion, race, color, or creed.

Article IV Officers

The executive officers of the Club shall be as follows:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer

The aforementioned officers shall constitute the Executive Board. Any student member is eligible for nomination as an officer of the Executive Board who; (a) meets the college's eligibility for student office holding which consists of a 2.0/4.0 average; and (b) fulfills the qualifications as set forth by the Executive Board.

DATE INFOCUS Activity, Leader, Location

- 8/24 Discussion: How to Succeed in the US, Prof. Bob Frederick, CU227
- 8/31 Outing: Miniature Golf, Cici's Pizza, Meet at Charger Union Lobby
- 9/7 Discussion: Cultural Shock: How to Overcome? Mr. Harold Bryer CU227
- 9/14 Discussion: Are religions relevant in the modern society? Dr. Huggy An CU227
- 9/21 Top Golf Social Activity, Meet at Charger Union Lobby
- 9/28 Discussion: Is God in the Bible relevant for modern science? Dr. Bijan Nemati, CU227
- 10/2 Discussion: What does your religion teach about marriage? CU227
- 10/5 No Discussion Group (Fall break)
- 10/13 Fall Break Field Trip: Tennessee Aquarium (Advanced Registration Required)
- 10/19 Discussion: Do you believe the heaven and hell? Dr. Earl Wells, CU 227
- 10/26 Outing: Halloween pumpkin carving (Cici's pizza)
- 11/2 Discussion: How does your god communicate with you? Dr. Rob Sheldon CU227
- 11/9 Discussion: If you committed sins, can you still go to heaven? Seth
- 11/16 Discussion: How do you believe the truthfulness of your religion? John Chism CU227
- 11/26 Celebration: Thanksgiving Dinner in American Homes, Contact: John Ruble
- 12/7 Celebration: InFocus Christmas Party, Shelby Center Room 301
- TBD Celebration: UAH Graduation Ceremony, Von Braun Center

2. Dealing with Cultural Shock!!

I. What is Culture?

- A. Is it how we count?
- B. Is it how we wave?
- C. Is it how we point?
- D. Is it what colors we wear to funerals?
- E. Is it what colors we wear to weddings?
- F. Is it how we smell?
- G. Is it what gifts we give?
- H. Does it determine what we eat?
- I. Does it determine how we eat? (the do's and don'ts)
- J. Does it determine what we find embarrassing?
- K. It is what influences both our _____ and our _____?

II. What is Shock?

- A. Is it like putting your finger in an electric socket?
- B. What is death shock? How does it affect people?
- C. What is divorce shock? How does it affect people?
- D. What is the common factor in both death shock and divorce shock?
(Answer: Lives that were in _____ are now not in_____.)

III. What are the stages of Cultural Shock?

- A. F _____
- B. F _____
- C. F _____
- D. F _____

IV. How do we overcome Cultural Shock?

- A. Don't _____ or get _____.
- B. Accept the _____.
- C. Learn to _____ with the _____.
- D. Learn what is _____ and what is _____.

3. What is successful life for you?

Q1: What is successful life for you?

How to obtain?

Q2: What is the most important thing for your successful life? Money, Degree, Fame, Job, etc.?

Q3: How does your religion (society or family) teach you about the successful life?

Does your religion help you obtain the successful life? How?

Luke 12:13-21 The Parable of the Rich Fool

¹³ Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”

¹⁴ Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?” ¹⁵ Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”

¹⁶ And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. ¹⁷ He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’

¹⁸ “Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. ¹⁹ And I’ll say to myself, “You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”’

²⁰ “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’

²¹ “This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”

Q4: What does the Bible verses, 12:15 and 12:20-21 teach you?

Is it bad to make a lot of money, to get higher degree or to get a good job for the successful life?

Q5: What is essential for successful life according to the Bible verses?

Q6: How does your religion give you the eternal life?

John 3:16-17

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son (Jesus), that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Q7: According to the above Bible verses, how can we get the eternal life?

What does it mean “God gave his only begotten Son”? What does it mean “whoever believes in Him will have eternal life”? Is the God going to close His eyes to our sins?

1 John 1:8-9

⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he (God) is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Q8: Do you want to have eternal life by repenting your sins and believing in Jesus?

4. The Afterlife -- a Christian Perspective

Q1: Is there life after death? Where do you go when you die. Do you just cease to exist or is there a heaven or hell? Please share your thoughts with your group.

Let us now explore what followers of Christ generally believe about this subject by looking at different parts of the Bible.

Death is a part of life:

A famous quote from Benjamin Franklin (one of America's founding fathers) was "In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes." Death is something we all will someday face. The Bible says

Hebrews 9:27: Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment

Death does not seem right:

Have you ever been to a funeral of someone you love? To me even though death is inevitable something about it does not feel right.

Q2: How do you feel when someone close to you dies?

Ecclesiastes 3:11 He [God] has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

Q3: What do you think this verse from the Bible may mean?

How the Bible describes this afterlife:

There are several places where the bible gives us some visions about heaven. More often than not the author relating this experience is overwhelmed by the experience (falling face down, feeling unworthy, or being emboldened in some way). One gets the idea that words cannot describe what the author saw because no one has ever experienced anything like it!

1 Corinthians 13:12: For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

The previous verse discusses our incomplete knowledge of God and the future in general, but it also hints at something else. What might this be?

Heaven -- place to better know God:

A follower of Christ has an intimate relationship with the God who created him or her. This relationship is a big part of the heavenly experience. The believer will get to know the infinite God who loves him/her and enjoy his fellowship forever!

Revelation 21:3: And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

Q4: The above verse talks about the future heaven. What does it say about God's relationship with his followers?

Heaven -- place without pain or sorrow:

Heaven is then described as

Revelation 21:4 'He [God] will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'

Heaven -- place to be with other believers:

Heaven is a place where we be a place where believers will be reunited with those who preceded them in death and who will die after them.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-15: Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep.

Q5: How do these views of heaven compare to other ones that you know?

The Eternal Perspective

The belief in the afterlife and heaven give the Christian an eternal perspective. This perspective is demonstrated by early disciples who gave up their lives in order to share the good news about Jesus Christ and his offer of eternal life. Consider the disciple Paul who describes his recent experiences as

2 Corinthians 11:24-27: Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.

But he was able to say

2 Corinthians 4:16-18: Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Romans 8:31-39: ... If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Q6: What do these verses say about how one can view the problems of life if they are a believer in Christ and the afterlife that he promises?

The world is not what it should be:

The world we live in is not what it should be (crime, social injustice, war, etc.).

Q7: Why do you think this is the case?

Romans 3:9-11:9 What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God.

Romans 3:23: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Q8: What does the Bible say is a characteristic of people in general? If this is so why is the world not like it should be?

God's loving actions have made the afterlife possible

Romans 6:23: For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

John 3:16: For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

1 John 5:11: And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

Q9: What do you think are the meaning of these verses?

The way to enter heaven

Most religious traditions believe that to enter the eternal life one must do more good things than bad things.

The Bible says

John 14:1-3: [Jesus said] "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

Q10: How is the Christian view of entering the afterlife different from these views?

5. How to communicate with God

Gen 2:7: Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. 8 The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. 9 Out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Q1: What is the breath of life? What does it say about all humans? What does it say about God?

Gen 2:15 Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. 16 The LORD God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; 17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

Q2: What can we infer from the location? Adam’s 1st job? What can we infer from the medium of the Prohibition God gave Adam?

Gen 3:8 They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” 10 He said, “I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.” 11 And He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” 12 The man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.”

Q3: What can we infer about Adam’s usual behavior toward God? God’s usual behavior toward Adam? What has changed?

Gen 4:8: And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. 9 Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” And he said, “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?” 10 He said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to Me from the ground. 11 Now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. 12 When you cultivate the ground, it will no longer yield its strength to you; you will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth.” 13 Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is too great to bear! 14 Behold, You have driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Your face I will be hidden, and I will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”

Q4: What can we infer from God’s 1st question? From Cain’s 1st answer? Compared to Adam, what changed in Cain’s curse? From Cain’s 2nd answer, what has changed from 1st answer? What is Cain most afraid of? What changed in Cain’s life?

We now jump to 1400BC, to an Israelite raised by an Egyptian princess, and now the general leading his people out of captivity, out of Egypt. He writes a 5 books, 3 of them “Laws” on how to live as a different kind of nation—free, independent, without a king or government, and obedient only to God.

Deu 4:5: “See, I have taught you statutes and judgments just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do thus in the land where you are entering to possess it. 6 So keep and do *them*, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ 7 For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the

LORD our God whenever we call on Him? 8 Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today?

Q5: What two methods of communication? How are they different? What is the significance of writing?

Deu 38:9 “When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations. 10 There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, 11 or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. 12 For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you. 13 You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. 14 For those nations, which you shall dispossess, listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners, but as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you *to do so*.

Q6: What are the things they are NOT free to do? Can you summarize them in < 5 words?

15 “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. 16 This is according to all that you asked of the LORD your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die.’ 17 The LORD said to me, ‘They have spoken well. 18 I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. 19 It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require *it* of him. 20 But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.’ 21 You may say in your heart, ‘How will we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?’ 22 When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

Q7: How common are fakirs? What danger do they bring? Who would ever take the job of prophet?

Jer 1:4 Now the word of the LORD came to me saying, 5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

6 Then I said, “Alas, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, Because I am a youth.”

7 But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am a youth,’ Because everywhere I send you, you shall go, And all that I command you, you shall speak. 8 “Do not be afraid of them, For I am with you to deliver you,” declares the LORD. 9 Then the LORD stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me, “Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. 10 “See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, To pluck up and to break down, To destroy and to overthrow, To build and to plant.”

Q8: Why do prophets take the job? When was the last prophet? What changed in the New Testament?

6. If You Committed Sins, Can You Still Go to Heaven?

Introductory Questions

Q1. If a friend does something wrong to you (e.g. steal, lie, say something unkind), how do you feel? How does the wrong affect your relationship with that person? How is the relationship restored?

Q2. In your religion, how do you restore a good relationship with your god if you do something wrong? Can you do so much wrong that your god will not accept you?

What the Bible Teaches

Luke 23:32-33 — “32 Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him (Jesus). 33 And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.”

Luke 23:39-43 — “39 One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying ‘Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!’ 40 But the other rebuked him, saying, ‘Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.’ 42 And he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’ 43 And he said to him, ‘Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.’”

Q3. According to this passage, what are the requirements to go to heaven (or Paradise)?

Q4. Why do you think that Jesus stayed on the cross? What was his purpose?

Romans 5:8-11 — “8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. 11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Q5. What do you think are some things that deserve the wrath of God?

Q6. What happens if you sin again after you repent?

I John 2:1 — “1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

I John 3:9-10 — “9 No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. 10 By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.”

7. Hope in an Anxious Time

Q1: Do you ever feel anxious or helpless? How do you overcome those feelings?
Do you ever feel hopeless?

God's Promises Bring Hope.

Hebrews 6

¹³ For example, there was God's promise to Abraham. Since there was no one greater to swear by, God took an oath in his own name, saying:

¹⁴ "I will certainly bless you,
and I will multiply your descendants beyond number."^[a]

¹⁵ Then Abraham waited patiently, and he received what God had promised.

¹⁶ Now when people take an oath, they call on someone greater than themselves to hold them to it. And without any question that oath is binding. ¹⁷ God also bound himself with an oath, so that those who received the promise could be perfectly sure that he would never change his mind. ¹⁸ So God has given both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. ¹⁹ This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary. ²⁰ Jesus has already gone in there for us. He has become our eternal High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.

Q2: Has anyone ever broken a promise to you? Was it hard to trust that person again?
How strong is an oath?

Now trustworthy is someone who make a promise and an oath and fulfils them.

Q3: Does that give you hope the next time there is a promise?

Matthew 11

²⁷ "My Father has entrusted everything to me. No one truly knows the Son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

²⁸ Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

²⁹ Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."

Q4: Is it interesting that the Son of God, Jesus, would say he is "humble and gentle"?
Are those characteristics you would think of when you think about God?

Q5: What does it mean to take my yoke?
How does he teach us?

Hebrews 11:6

⁶ And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.

Q6: Is knowledge a part of faith or are knowledge and faith totally separate?

Q7: Does God reward everyone? What are the conditions of the rewards?

Philippians 4:6-7

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done. ⁷ Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

Q8: Peace overcomes anxiety. How do we obtain peace?