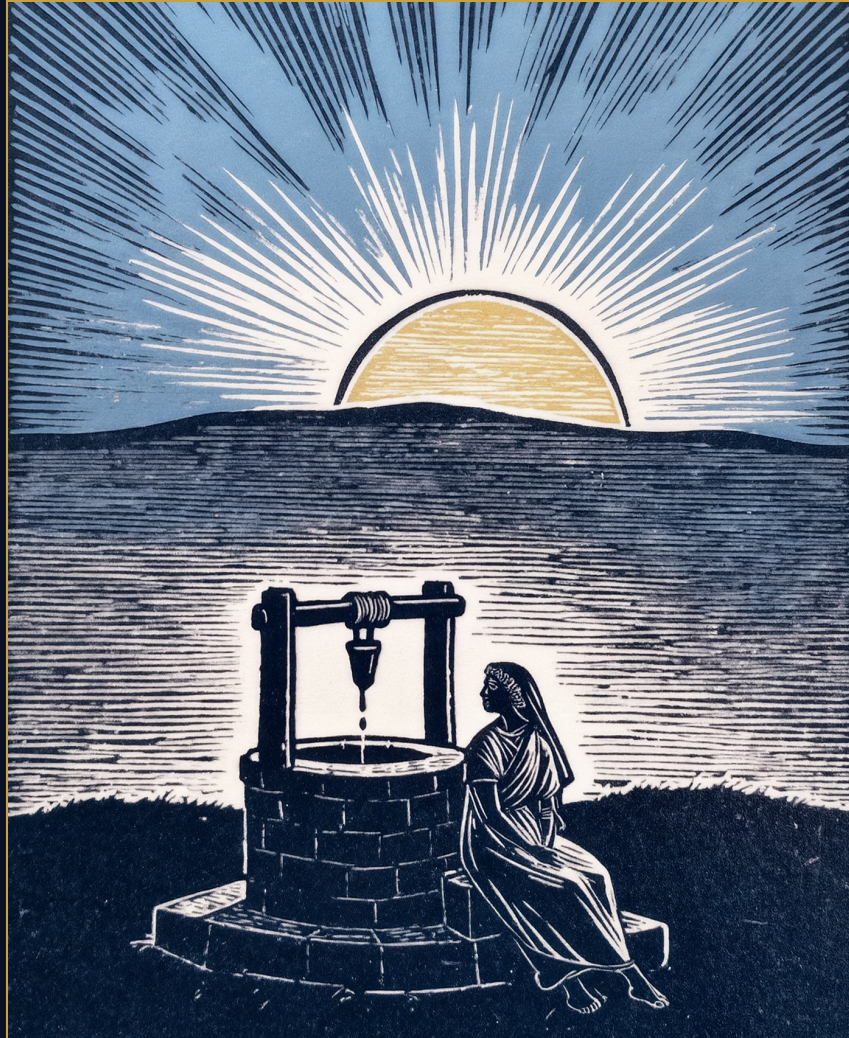


A SIX-WEEK SMALL-GROUP STUDY

We Are Being Tested

What the Bible Says About Why We're Here, for Anyone Who Wonders



FREE FOR EVERY CHURCH · WEAREBEINGTESTED.COM

Six weeks, one question

The book reads the Bible front to back as the record of a trial, with the whole human race in the case. This guide walks a group through it in six sessions, one for each episode of the video series.

EACH WEEK

- **Before you meet**, everyone reads the chapters, or listens to Keith Adler read them. Both are free at wearebeingtested.com, and the audio follows along with the text.
- **Open** (5 minutes): read the big idea aloud.
- **Read the passages** (10 minutes): take one or two of the Bible passages listed and read them aloud from your own Bibles.
- **Watch** (optional): the episode, or a chapter video or short clip, free on the site.
- **Talk** (40 minutes): pick the questions that fit your group. You won't get to all of them.
- **Close** (5 minutes): name one thing you'll carry into the week, and pray in your group's own way.

FOR THE LEADER

- The book keeps the hard parts of the Bible in: massacres, a father told to sacrifice his son, grief, the end of life. Read ahead, and let people pass on a question.
- It isn't a book that assumes agreement. It marks its own answers as belief where they go past the evidence, and says what would prove it wrong. You don't have to agree with it to discuss it well.
- "Not every suffering is a test, and a trial God permits is not an abuse he blesses." If someone in your group is carrying grief or harm, that sentence is from the book; hold onto it.
- If anyone is struggling, talk to them after, and connect them with your pastor or a counselor. In the United States, call or text **988** at any hour.

FREE FOR YOUR CHURCH

No permission needed, no fees, no reporting. You may:

- Read and share the free online edition with anyone.
- Download the PDF of the whole book and print it, in whole or in part, for your members, classes and guests, at no charge.
- Play the audiobook and the score in services, classes, retreats and small groups.
- Show the videos and short clips in worship, classes and youth groups, in person or in a streamed service.

- Project the slides, and print the study guide, bulletin insert and poster as many times as you like.
- Quote the book in sermons, lessons, newsletters and posts, with the credit line below.

Please don't:

- Sell it, or charge admission or fees to hear, read or watch it.
- Change the text, or present excerpts as someone else's words.
- Post the files on another website or app. Link here instead, so readers always get the current edition.

Credit line: From *We Are Being Tested* by Keith Adler. Free to read, hear and share at wearebeingtested.com.

The Setup

Read before you meet: Foreword, Prologue: Twelve Jars, Three Readers, 1. The Sandbox, 2. The Rule, 3. The Mark
About 27 minutes to read, or 40 to listen, at wearebeingtested.com

THE BIG IDEA

The Bible reads like the record of a trial, and the one on trial is the whole human race, not one nation or one church.

It begins in a bounded garden: one rule, real choices, and a maker who never lets go of what he made.

READ ALOUD

- **Prologue: Twelve Jars** 1 Kings 18–19
- **Three Readers** Mark 9:14–29; John 20:24–29; Job 42:7–9
- **1. The Sandbox** Genesis 2–3; Exodus 11–12; Exodus 19–20; Exodus 32
- **2. The Rule** 2 Kings 22–23; Deuteronomy 29:29; Luke 4:16–30
- **3. The Mark** Genesis 4–6

WATCH

Episode 1, “The Setup,” and the chapter videos and clips for these chapters, free at wearebeingtested.com/watch.html.

TALK

1. The prologue says the water on Carmel was “removing a confound.” Is reading a miracle as procedure a help to faith, or a threat to it?
2. Chapter 2 says what we need to know is “never withheld from us,” only hidden. Where in your own life has something important been hidden in plain sight?
3. The book says the whole human race is on trial, not one nation or one church. Does that feel like good news or bad news to you, and why?

CARRY IT INTO THE WEEK

Questions are from the book's own Questions for Discussion; the last one in each session is drawn from its Case in Brief.

The Trial of Job

Read before you meet: 4. Grace, 5. Job, 6. Admissible
About 30 minutes to read, or 44 to listen, at wearebeingtested.com

THE BIG IDEA

The charge is the accuser's: that nothing we do is for nought, that every good thing people do is really wages.

A test can only show character if it can't be seen coming, so Job is never told the terms.

Grace, a gift with nothing expected back, is the one thing appetite can't explain, and it is God's before it is ours.

READ ALOUD

- **4. Grace** Genesis 28 and 32; Job 1; Mark 12:41–44
- **5. Job** Job 1–2; Job 38–42
- **6. Admissible** Deuteronomy 31; Leviticus 10 and 19; Joshua 6; Matthew 1:1–17

WATCH

Episode 2, “The Trial of Job,” and the chapter videos and clips for these chapters, free at wearebeingtested.com/watch.html.

TALK

1. Chapter 4 calls grace, given with nothing expected back, the one thing appetite can't produce. Can you remember a kindness done for you that no one else ever saw? What did it tell you about the giver?
2. Job was never told the terms of his trial. Would it have been kinder to tell him? Would it have been the same trial?
3. Job's wife is never taken. How do you read her words to him, and her place in the story?
4. The Bible keeps the incest, the murders and the failures of its heroes. Does that make it more believable to you, or less?
5. Job is never told the terms of his test. If you had been told the terms of a hard season in your life, would it have been the same test?

CARRY IT INTO THE WEEK

Questions are from the book's own Questions for Discussion; the last one in each session is drawn from its Case in Brief.

Moriah

Read before you meet: 7. First Positive, 8. Royal Priests, 9. Moriah, 10. Substitution
About 29 minutes to read, or 42 to listen, at wearebeingtested.com

THE BIG IDEA

The answer to the charge is a substitute: the Son, who stood on both sides, paid the penalty himself, and rose.

READ ALOUD

- **7. First Positive** Genesis 18–19; Genesis 24; Matthew 25:31–46
- **8. Royal Priests** Genesis 1–3; Genesis 14:17–20; 1 Peter 2:9
- **9. Moriah** Genesis 21–22; Hebrews 11:17–19
- **10. Substitution** Isaiah 53; Mark 12:1–12; Matthew 27; 1 Corinthians 15

WATCH

Episode 3, “Moriah,” and the chapter videos and clips for these chapters, free at wearebeingtested.com/watch.html.

TALK

1. In Moriah, “the one sacrifice of a child that God commanded never happened.” Does that help with Genesis 22, or does the command still stand in the way?
2. Chapter 10 says the answer to the accuser’s charge is a substitute: the Son, who paid the penalty himself, and rose. What changes when the one who set the terms is the one who pays?

CARRY IT INTO THE WEEK

Questions are from the book’s own Questions for Discussion; the last one in each session is drawn from its Case in Brief.

The Other Side

Read before you meet: 11. The Other Side Runs a Test, 12. The Pharaoh Curse, 13. On the Job, 14. The Method
About 33 minutes to read, or 48 to listen, at wearebeingtested.com

THE BIG IDEA

God showed overwhelming power early, and it produced fear, not trust, so he stepped back far enough to be refused.

People pronounce their own sentences, and God often holds them to their words and often lets them go.

READ ALOUD

- **11. The Other Side Runs a Test** 1 Samuel 5–6; Judges 6–7; Jeremiah 28; Matthew 4:1–11
- **12. The Pharaoh Curse** Exodus 8–10; 2 Samuel 11–12; Judges 11; 2 Kings 2:23–25; Acts 5:1–11
- **13. On the Job** Exodus 3–4; Numbers 20:1–13; Luke 15:11–32
- **14. The Method** Exodus 8:20–32; Exodus 9:1–7; Daniel 1; 1 Corinthians 14:26–33; 1 Corinthians 15:1–8

WATCH

Episode 4, “The Other Side,” and the chapter videos and clips for these chapters, free at wearebeingtested.com/watch.html.

TALK

1. The Pharaoh curse says people are judged by their own words. Have you ever pronounced a sentence on someone else and later found it described you?
2. The older son in the parable “talks like an employee.” Where do you catch yourself treating your place with God as wages?
3. Chapter 14 finds a control group, a null hypothesis, replication and peer review scattered through the record, and Paul tells his readers to Prove all things (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Is a faith that invites testing stronger or weaker for it? What would you test first?
4. God showed overwhelming power early, and it produced fear, not trust. Why might trust need room to be refused?

CARRY IT INTO THE WEEK

Questions are from the book's own Questions for Discussion; the last one in each session is drawn from its Case in Brief.

The Quiet Years

Read before you meet: 15. Ruth and Esther, 16. Jonah, 17. The Dissent, 18. The Seams, 19. The Terms on Our Side
About 32 minutes to read, or 45 to listen, at wearebeingtested.com

THE BIG IDEA

The record keeps its own damaging evidence, the way a court record would, and the rest of a fair test's method too: a control group, replication, witnesses, and honest uncertainty.

Our side of the covenant is to repent and believe. The offer goes to everyone, and some refuse it.

READ ALOUD

- **15. Ruth and Esther** Ruth 1–4; Esther 3–7
- **16. Jonah** Jonah 1–4
- **17. The Dissent** Ecclesiastes 1–3; Ecclesiastes 9; Ecclesiastes 12
- **18. The Seams** Exodus 25; 2 Kings 6:8–23; Matthew 17:1–9; Acts 2
- **19. The Terms on Our Side** Hosea 1–3; Genesis 20; Romans 2

WATCH

Episode 5, “The Quiet Years,” and the chapter videos and clips for these chapters, free at wearebeingtested.com/watch.html.

TALK

1. God is never named in the Hebrew text of Esther. Where have you seen what looked like chance turn out to be something more?
2. Jonah ran because he knew God would be merciful to his enemies. Who would you least want God to forgive?
3. Ecclesiastes says who knoweth. Is it a comfort or a problem that the Bible keeps a book of honest doubt?
4. Chapter 19 says the terms are already written in us, and that none of us has kept them. Do you agree with both halves?
5. The book says the record keeps its own damaging evidence and states what would prove its reading wrong. Does a faith that invites testing feel stronger or weaker to you?

CARRY IT INTO THE WEEK

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God Sees Everything

Read before you meet: 20. Daily Bread, 21. Within Reach, 22. Custodians, 23. Testament, 24. The Last Second, Epilogue: God Sees Everything

About 32 minutes to read, or 43 to listen, at wearebeingtested.com

THE BIG IDEA

What is placed in our keeping, we answer for, from a brother in a field to a patient at the end of life.

God sees everything, and that is what makes the trial fair.

READ ALOUD

- **20. Daily Bread** Exodus 16; Matthew 6:9–13; John 6; Isaiah 58
- **21. Within Reach** Genesis 4:1–16; Jeremiah 29 and 31; John 19:25–27
- **22. Custodians** Matthew 25:14–30; John 11:1–44
- **23. Testament** John 13; Deuteronomy 8; Revelation 21
- **24. The Last Second** Luke 23:32–43; Matthew 25:31–46

WATCH

Episode 6, “God Sees Everything,” and the chapter videos and clips for these chapters, free at wearebeingtested.com/watch.html.

TALK

1. Chapter 20 calls the manna a daily test of trust, and asks whether enough will be enough. What would “enough for today” look like in your life?
2. Chapter 22 says that withdrawing a treatment is not withdrawing care. What does it mean to keep someone to the end?
3. The two thieves were in the same condition: one asked for a way down, the other asked to be remembered. Thomas asked for proof, and he was answered too. Which of the three sounds most like you, and on which days?
4. “God sees everything.” When you hear that, is it a threat, a comfort, or both? Did the book change your answer?

5. “What is placed in our keeping, we answer for.” Who has been placed in your keeping this season?

CARRY IT INTO THE WEEK

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Read it all, free

The whole book is free to read and to hear, read by the author, at wearebeingtested.com. Scan the code to open it on a phone.



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