

S T U D Y G U I D E



EXPLORING

ISLAM

James N. Anderson

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Exploring Islam

James N. Anderson



LIGONIER MINISTRIES

Renew your Mind.

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Introduction

In our day, it is common for people to hold uninformed opinions about other religions. This is particularly true with regard to Islam, but being an effective witness to Muslims requires an understanding of their beliefs and practices. In *Exploring Islam*, Dr. James Anderson surveys the central tenets, history, and practices of the Islamic faith. He encourages Christians to think biblically and critically about Islam for the sake of more effectively witnessing to our Muslim neighbors, that by our witness they may share in the blessings of faith in Jesus Christ.

This study guide is a companion to the video teaching series. Whether you are using the DVDs, streaming the videos on Ligonier.org, or going through the course in Ligonier Connect, this resource is designed to help you make the most of the learning experience. For each message in the series, there is a corresponding lesson in this guide. Here is what you will find in each lesson:

INTRODUCTION	<p>The introduction is a brief paragraph that summarizes the content covered in the lecture and considered in the study guide lesson.</p> <p>How to use: Use the introduction to each lesson to get a sense of the big picture before watching the video. Refer to these statements as you work through the study guide to remind you of what have already covered and where you are headed.</p>
LEARNING GOALS	<p>The learning goals are the knowledge and skills the study guide lesson will endeavor to equip you with as you work through the lecture content.</p> <p>How to use: Familiarize yourself with the goals of each lesson before engaging its contents. Keeping the overall purpose in mind as you watch each video and reflect on or discuss the questions will help you get the most out of each lesson.</p>
KEY IDEAS	<p>The key ideas are the major points or takeaways from the lecture.</p> <p>How to use: Use these ideas to prepare yourself for each lesson and to review previous lessons. They describe specifically the knowledge each lecture is communicating.</p>

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	<p>The questions are the guided reflection and/or discussion component of the lesson that are intended to help you prepare for, process, and organize what you are learning.</p> <p>How to use: Reflect on individually or discuss in a group the questions in the order in which they appear in the lesson. The  icon indicates where to play and pause the video for questions that address specific segments of the lecture.</p>
PRAYER	<p>The prayer section offers suggestions for how to close the lesson in prayer with respect to what was taught in the lecture.</p> <p>How to use: Consider using each lesson's prayer section as a guide to personal or group prayer. These sections follow the ACTS prayer model, which you can learn more about in R.C. Sproul's Crucial Questions booklet, <i>Does Prayer Change Things?</i> This helpful guide is available as a free e-book at Ligonier.org.</p>
REVIEW QUIZ	<p>The review quiz is a set of six multiple-choice questions that appear at the end of each lesson.</p> <p>How to use: Use each quiz to check your comprehension and memory of the major points covered in each lecture. It will be most beneficial to your learning if you take a lesson's quiz either sometime between lessons or just before you begin the next lesson in the study guide.</p>
ANSWER KEY	<p>The answer key provides explanations for the reflection and discussion questions and answers to the multiple-choice questions in the review quiz.</p> <p>How to use: Use the answer key to check your own answers or when you do not know the answer. Note: Do not give in too quickly; struggling for a few moments to recall an answer reinforces it in your mind.</p>

Study Schedules

The following table suggests four plans for working through the *Exploring Islam* video teaching series and this companion study guide. Whether you are going through this series on your own or with a group, these schedules should help you plan your study path.

	Extended 12-Week Plan	Standard 10-Week Plan	Abbreviated 6-Week Plan	Intensive 4-Week Plan
WEEK	LESSON			
1	*	1	1	1–2
2	1	2	2 & 3	3–5
3	2	3	4 & 5	6–8
4	3	4	6 & 7	9–10
5	4	5	8 & 9	
6	5	6	10	
7	6	7		
8	7	8		
9	8	9		
10	9	10		
11	10			
12	*			

* For these weeks, rather than completing lessons, spend your time discussing and praying about your learning goals for the study (the first week) and the most valuable takeaways from the study (the last week).

Why Study Islam?

INTRODUCTION

Why should Christians spend time learning about another religion? After all, will learning about another religion actually help us grow as Christians? In this lesson, Dr. Anderson begins this series by providing a series of reasons why it is right, appropriate, and good for Christians to learn about Islam.

LEARNING GOALS

When you have finished this lesson, you should be able to:

- Provide six reasons why it is important to learn about Islam
- Understand the direction of this teaching series and the questions it will answer

KEY IDEAS

- Islam is the second-largest world religion today.
- Islam relates to Christianity such that learning about it will increase your appreciation of the Christian faith and help you engage with Muslims.
- Islam is a significant force both on the geopolitical stage and in the United States; learning about it will solidify your identity with persecuted Christians worldwide.

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

🕒 Before the Video

What Do You Think?

- What is your general impression of Islam? Do you have any Muslim coworkers, family, or friends?
- Why are you undertaking this study? What do you hope to learn about Islam?

Scripture Reading

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

—John 3:16–17

- What motive might this passage provide for learning about Islam?

🕒 During the Video

▶ *Play the video; pause at 11:54.*

Islam and the Love of God

- What is the most important reason to learn about Islam?
- In what sense can it be said that Islam is a Christian heresy? What will learning about Islam then do for your understanding of Christianity?
- Does God love Muslims? How do you know?

▶ *Play the video to the end.*

Islam and the World

- What are some events that demonstrate the relevance of Islam on a geopolitical scale?
- How do we account for the growth of Islam globally and in the United States?
- Why is learning about Islam important in terms of the global church? What can be done for Christians who face persecution at the hands of Muslims?

🕒 After the Video

- “Jesus Christ died for Muslims.” How are we able to make such a statement? What is an acronym that is helpful for remembering the heart we should have for Muslims?

If you are in a group, have the members discuss the various ways that popular opinion about Muslims is formed and how that makes a statement like “Jesus Christ died for Muslims” shocking. How does this statement inform your understanding of the gospel?

- What did you consider to be the most shocking statistic about Islam in this lecture, either about Islam on a global scale or within the United States?

If you are in a group, have the members name what they considered to be the most shocking statistics about Islam and why they were particularly shocking.

- What are Dr. Anderson’s hopes for you through this study? Will you commit to praying that God uses this study to actualize these hopes in your life?

Toward the end of this lecture, Dr. Anderson mentioned ten questions that he hopes to answer through this series. If you are in a group, have each member identify which question they are most excited about having answered and why.

PRAYER

- Praise God for His love for all people, tribes, tongues, and nations.
- Confess your hardheartedness toward Muslims or your apathy regarding their salvation.
- Thank God for providing resources that can help you share the gospel with Muslims.
- Ask God to help you understand Islam and to give you a desire to see Muslims saved.

REVIEW QUIZ

1. What percentage of the world population will be Muslim within the next decade?
 - a. 10%
 - b. 15%
 - c. 20%
 - d. 25%
2. Which of following explains the rapid growth of Islam worldwide?
 - a. Birth rates
 - b. Immigration
 - c. Increase of mosques
 - d. Conversions to Islam
3. What word provides a helpful acronym about a truly Christian heart for Muslims?
 - a. Muslim
 - b. Qur'an
 - c. Sharia
 - d. Islam
4. What book of the Bible was referenced as a helpful example of how God can love people who are in a false religion while at the same time hate the false religion itself?
 - a. Genesis
 - b. Jonah
 - c. John
 - d. Romans

5. While it is difficult to determine if Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the world, studies show that Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the United States.
 - a. True
 - b. False

6. Which of the following statements was *not* presented as a reason to learn about Islam?
 - a. To grow in appreciation of your own Christian faith
 - b. To be equipped to engage with and evangelize Muslims
 - c. To develop ways to win arguments against Muslims
 - d. To grasp the context of Islamic persecution of Christians

Answer Key—Why Study Islam?

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

🕒 Before the Video

What Do You Think?

These are personal questions. The answers should be based on your own knowledge and experience.

Scripture Reading

- What motive might this passage provide for learning about Islam?

This passage provides an excellent motive for learning about Islam: God's love for the world. In undertaking this series, perhaps you will have an opportunity to use your new understanding of Islam to witness to Muslims of the unfailing love of Jesus Christ, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

🕒 During the Video

Islam and the Love of God

- What is the most important reason to learn about Islam?

The most important reason to learn about Islam is the fact that Islam is currently the second-largest world religion. Some research indicates that nearly 25 percent of the world's population adheres to Islam, but in any case, it is safe to say that more than one-fifth of the world is currently Muslim.

- In what sense can it be said that Islam is a Christian heresy? What will learning about Islam then do for your understanding of Christianity?

It can be said that Islam is a Christian heresy because it is indebted historically and theologically to Christianity. Learning about Islam will thus give us a greater understanding and appreciation of orthodox Christianity so that we can defend it against the claims of Islam. Understanding a false religion better will deepen our understanding and appreciation of the one true religion of Jesus Christ.

- Does God love Muslims? How do you know?

Yes, God does love Muslims. We can know this based on the fact that Muslims are human beings, and by virtue of being human, they are created in the image of God and therefore have dignity and value in God's sight (Ps. 145:9).

Islam and the World

- What are some events that demonstrate the relevance of Islam on a geopolitical scale?

Some potential answers may include: the conflict in Middle East; the 9/11 attacks; the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria; the Arab Spring; the Benghazi consulate killings; the resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism in Indonesia; and the persecution of Muslim minorities by Buddhist groups in Myanmar.

- How do we account for the growth of Islam globally and in the United States?

Globally, the rapid growth of Islam can be accounted for by the birth rates of Muslims. In the United States, birth rates are a factor, but the immigration rates of Muslims into the United States are a major reason for Islam's growing presence in America. More than 10 percent of legal immigrants to the United States each year are Muslim. Pray that this would be an opportunity for Muslims to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- Why is learning about Islam important in terms of the global church? What can be done for Christians who face persecution at the hands of Muslims?

It is important to learn about Islam because we have brothers and sisters in Christ who suffer persecution in Muslim countries and cultures. If we do not learn about Islam, we cannot pray for these Christians as we ought, knowing how to intercede for them in real, concrete ways. Likewise, if we do not understand Islam, we will not know how to raise awareness in an informed way.

🕒 After the Video

- “Jesus Christ died for Muslims.” How are we able to make such a statement? What is an acronym that is helpful for remembering the heart we should have for Muslims?

We are able to say that Jesus Christ died for Muslims because it is fundamentally a true statement. Jesus died for all types of people, including Muslims. In light of the doctrine of limited atonement, we can know this because there are Muslims who have converted to Christianity. An acronym that is helpful for remembering the heart we should have for Muslims is ISLAM: “I Should Love All Muslims.”

- What did you consider to be the most shocking statistic about Islam in this lecture, either about Islam on a global scale or within the United States?

The answer to this question should reveal what you personally considered to be the most shocking statistic about Islam in this lecture. For instance, the number of mosques in the United States has nearly doubled since September 11, 2001.

- What are Dr. Anderson’s hopes for you through this study? Will you commit to praying that God uses this study to actualize these hopes in your life?

Dr. Anderson hopes that this study will help you better understand and appreciate your own Christian faith and the truths of the gospel. He hopes it will equip you to engage Muslims in a fruitful way, by cultivating a great compassion for Muslims and a greater confidence in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

REVIEW QUIZ

Lesson 1

1. **D.**

Islam is growing at a significant rate, such that it is not uncommon to hear that Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the world. Such a claim does have some difficulties, but it is safe to say that adherents to Islam will make up 25 percent of the world’s population within the next decade. Some research even indicates that there were 1.8 billion Muslims in the world in 2015, which already accounts for 24 percent of the world population.

2. **A.**

The rapid growth of Islam on a global scale can be accounted for by the birth rates among Muslims. A 2017 study by the Pew Research Center stated that babies born to Muslims will begin to outnumber babies born to Christians by the year 2035. Within the United States, immigration is a major contributor to Islam’s rapid growth.

3. **D.**

ISLAM is a helpful acronym for understanding a truly Christian heart for Muslims. It stands for “I Should Love All Muslims,” or, as Dr. Anderson presented as even more challenging, “I Shall Love All Muslims.”

4. **B.**

The book of Jonah was referenced as an example of God’s love for people and God’s hatred of false religion. God did not love the practices and beliefs of Nineveh, but He did have compassion on the Ninevites and sent the prophet Jonah to preach to them. In a like manner, God loves Muslims but hates the false religion of Islam.

5. **A.**

It is difficult to verify the claim that Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the world due to questions about how we should measure growth. On the other hand, studies show that Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the United States. For example, from 2000 to 2010, the Muslim population of the United States increased by 60 percent.

6. C.

There were many good reasons offered for why it is important for Christians to learn about Islam, but to develop ways to win arguments with Muslims was not one of them. There is a place for Christian apologetics when engaging with Muslims, but it is not merely to win arguments. It is to lead Muslims to Christ. Dr. Anderson will further discuss the role of apologetics in our engagement with Muslims in lesson 9.

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