

SIX SESSION STUDY GUIDE

YOU *belong*

BECAUSE GOD IS
WHO HE SAYS HE IS



CANDACE PAYNE

YOU
belong
BECAUSE GOD IS
WHO HE SAYS HE IS

STUDY GUIDE

Also By Candace Payne

Laugh It Up

(book, ebook, and audio book)

Defiant Joy

(Bible study guide, DVD, and digital video teaching sessions)

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STUDY GUIDE



SIX SESSIONS

CANDACE PAYNE

WITH DREW TILTON



You Belong Study Guide

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Note from The Author

Hey, ya'll! Candace Payne here. Let me be the first to personally welcome you to the *You Belong* group Bible study. I have found over the years that belonging is one of the deepest desires humans have. Equally, I've found that God also deeply desires for us to understand and experience how we belong to *Him*. Have you ever thought about that?

As I considered this in my own life, I couldn't deny that this intrinsic part of my faith was missing and I went on a journey to uncover it. I read over and over again all these different names describing God. Subsequently, I began to notice that He not only had multiple names for Himself but many descriptors of those who belong to Him as well. I decided to dig into all the names God ascribes to us in our belonging. This allowed me to connect the dots between who He says He is and how we subversively and absolutely belong to Him.





How This Study Guide Works

This study guide contains six guided *Group Gatherings* and six weeks' worth of guided *Fun Work* for you to do on your own in between gatherings. I want to make this study guide easy for you to navigate. So, let's take a closer look at what each of these sections include.

GROUP GATHERINGS

Each gathering is designed to be 70–90 minutes and is divided into three main sections: *Warming Up*, *Press Play*, *Belong Together*. For each session there is also a *Before You Go* section that will help you to prepare for your gathering before you arrive.



Before You Go

This first section is designed as a quick opportunity to prepare your heart and mind for your group gathering *before you arrive*. You can do it before rushing out the door, while eating a quick dinner, or while in your car parked outside of wherever your gathering is being hosted. This is an important opportunity to slow down and open your heart to whatever God might have for you.



Checking In (5 minutes)

Before just diving in each week, make sure you take 5 minutes to check in with one another. This doesn't have to be structured time, but it is important to connect a bit before starting your *Group Gathering* each week.



Press Play (18–22 minutes)

After reading a short introduction, you will start each gathering by watching a video featuring Yours Truly. This will help you to think about how *You Belong* from a

different angle each week. Take notes, write down questions, and notice what stands out to you. Each video is about 15 minutes, after which you will have a minute to yourself to write down your initial thoughts.



Belong Together (30–50 minutes)

The bulk of your time together will be spent interacting with each other as you talk through various questions, activities, and Bible verses. Each session will include opportunities to (1) take a quick *Pit Stop* by doing something engaging and interactive together, (2) *Explore the Idea* by talking through the main concept for that week, (3) *Unpack Some Truth* as you take a closer look at a couple passages of Scripture, and (4) go *Off the Beaten Path* by engaging in a group exercise. You will also have a weekly stop at the (5) *Souvenir Shop* as you consider what would be useful to take home with you and how you want to challenge yourself this week. You will finally close your time with the (6) *Prayer of Belonging*, a prayer that you will be praying over each other and yourselves throughout this study.



FILL UP WITH FUN WORK

In between each gathering there are a number of suggested activities, prayer experiences, and Bible passages for you to check out. They will definitely give you a deeper, more fulfilling experience with this study, so they are highly recommended. That being said, I hope they can be a time of refuge for you and not a time of stress. I call it *Fun Work* because that is what it is supposed to be! Just think of them as time with your good friend, Jesus.

PACK YOUR BAGS (LEADER'S GUIDE)

In the back of this book (page 115) there is a short leader's guide for each session. These guides are there to help whomever is leading the Group Gathering to prepare beforehand and make sure everyone has the best experience. If you will be leading this group or a session, be sure to check it out!

Alright, party people! Ready to take the plunge?!? I pray that you would not only connect in belonging with one another but also connect deeply in belonging with the God who made you and loves you. Enjoy the ride!



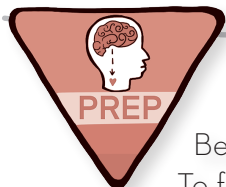
Session 1

DO I BELONG?



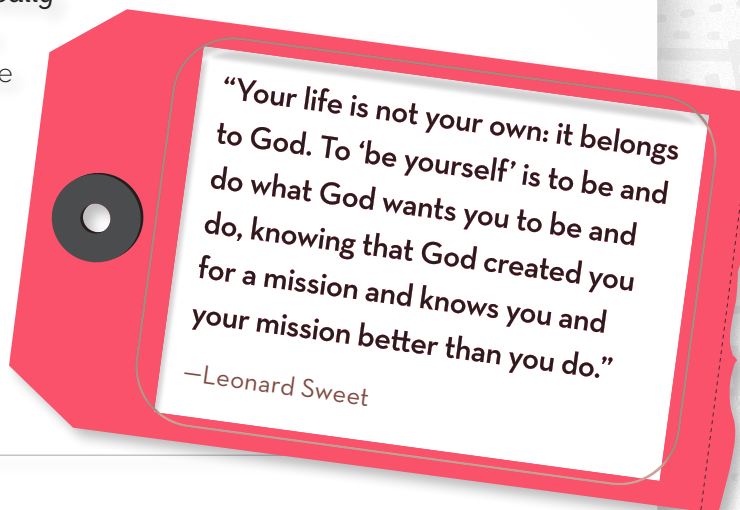
Before You Go to Study

Before your Group Gathering this week, take a few minutes to prepare your heart and mind using the prompts below.



Belonging is a big deal to us humans. To really be a part of something. To feel truly wanted and accepted. To be connected to others in meaningful ways. We seemingly spend our lives trying to be somebody's something (friend, spouse, parent, idol, leader, mentor, boo, babe). It is no wonder then that to not belong is one of our biggest fears. The terror of this concept leaves us always evaluating where we stand with others. *What do they think of me? How do I fit? Do I really belong?* I believe that the answer is a resounding "Yes!" and, over the course of this study, I hope God shows you just how much!

What are you hoping to see happen in your life during the course of this study? What might God want for you during this time?





This crafted prayer is intended to help you open your heart and mind to God during this study. Pray these words aloud or in your mind as a practice of embracing your belonging.

Prayer of Belonging

God, I want to know deeply who *you* say You are. In knowing You more fully, I find my identity and belonging in You. As my heart longs to fit in or feel fulfilled, I will trust in *you*. Through the roles You play in my life, the relationship You have with me, and by Your very nature, I understand how I belong to You.

Thank you for paying such a high price to make me Your own. Thank You for being a Father to my orphan heart. Thank You for being my first love. Thank You for creating me with a purpose to live with assignment and authority under Your Son Jesus' leading and instruction. Thank You for shepherding my wandering soul. Thank You for grafting me into Your family and pruning me so that I flourish.

I want to know who You are so intimately that the joy I experience overflows from understanding how I belong to You. And, God, above all, I echo the words Paul wrote in the book of Philippians, chapter 3, verse 12: "... I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me ..." I open my heart. Will You open my eyes and ears as well? In Jesus' name, Amen.



Group Gathering



After spending a few minutes catching up or getting to know each other, select a volunteer to read the following paragraph aloud.

Our world seems to be built around belonging. We create communities, seek out friendships, build families, plan parties, and connect on social media. No matter who you are, something inside you longs to belong. Over the course of this study, we will be exploring together the truth of who and whose you are according to God and what that means for your life. In the process, you will experience that you are God's and He is yours. This study was crafted to help you see, without a doubt, that *You Belong*.



(13 minutes)

Watch the video for Session 1. Feel free to take notes in the space provided.

General Field Notes

You belong to God.

Bible Verses I Use:

- 1 Corinthians 6:19
- Romans 14:7-9
- John 1:12
- Psalm 103
- Isaiah 41:3
- John 4:4
- 2 Corinthians 1:22
- 2 Corinthians 5:17-19
- Hebrews 12:2
- Luke 9:23-24



Belonging depends on what God has done for you, not what you can do for God.

We do not live as though we belong, because we do not understand how we belong.

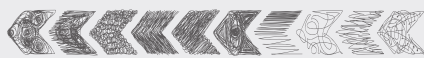
Your joy is connected with knowing who God is and how you belong to him.

God is who He says He is and you are His.

*"If we have no peace,
it is because we have
forgotten that we
belong to each other."*

—Mother Teresa

Slowing Down



Take a minute to review your notes and write down what stood out to you most during the video. What did you connect with and what challenged you?

Belong Together



(30–50 minutes)

Use the following questions, Bible passages, and activities to be real with one another, engage in conversation, and connect as a group.

PIT STOP

Supplies Needed: *Bowl of M&Ms or fun-size bag for each person*

Part of feeling like you belong is feeling like you are known. So, this activity is an opportunity to get to know one another a little better. Take a small handful of M&Ms (or one fun-size bag per person) and don't eat any of them. Assign a category for each color, for example:

- Red = family/childhood
- Blue = friends/crazy story
- Yellow = passions/hobbies
- Green = job/school
- Brown = favorite movie/musician/food/dance move

For every one of that color M&M you have, you have to share a fact from that category. (For instance, if you have three yellow M&Ms, you have to share three facts having to do with your passions and hobbies.) Make sure everyone has at least five M&Ms before you start.

EXPLORE THE IDEA


Use the following questions to help your group discuss what was shared in this session's video. Don't be afraid to go "off script" if the conversation is good!

1. What do you think it means to belong in a group, community, or family? How do you see people in the world around you seeking belonging?
2. What stands out for you most about what was covered in this session's video? How does it make you think differently about the importance of belonging?

3. How can exploring the ways we are described by God (His children, sheep, bride, etc.) help us to understand how we belong to God? Which way of belonging to God feels the most difficult for you to accept?
4. How have you seen joy be directly connected to belonging in your life (specifically belonging to God)? How do you want to see your perspective shift when it comes to your sense of belonging in life and where you are seeking it out?

UNPACK SOME TRUTH

Select volunteers to read the following Bible passages aloud and unpack them together. Use the questions provided to help you explore the verses.



It is God who enables us, along with you, to stand firm for Christ. He has commissioned us, and he has identified us as His own by placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the first installment that guarantees everything He has promised us.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22, NLT

Jesus said to all of his followers, "If you truly desire to be my disciple, you must disown your life completely, embrace my 'cross' as your own, and surrender to my ways. For if you choose self-sacrifice, giving up your lives for my glory, you will embark on a discovery of more and more of true life. But if you choose to keep your lives for yourselves, you will lose what you try to keep.

Luke 9:23-24, TPT

- What does it mean to you to know that God identifies you *as His own* in Christ?
- How have you seen others try to earn their belonging to God? How have you tried to do so?
- How can *surrendering to Jesus' ways* and *giving up our lives for his glory* help us to experience true life?
- How is surrender an important step if we are going to accept the true belonging available to us through Jesus? How do you want to surrender to Jesus' way this week?

OFF THE BEATEN PATH

If you have an extra 15–20 minutes, consider engaging in this activity as a group. This is an opportunity to sit in this session’s main idea a bit longer and explore it in a creative and intentional way.

As a group, take some time to come up with a definition of *belonging* that is based on what you have learned in this session. Talk about how this definition of belonging is different from your old understanding of belonging. Write your group’s new definition of belonging here:

def. *BELONGING*: _____

SOUVENIR SHOP

Draw a picture representing what you want to take home from this Group Gathering. Then write down one challenge you would like to personally pursue this week. Make sure your challenge is stretching yet attainable for you. Briefly share your souvenir and challenge with the group.

My Souvenir:

This week I challenge myself to:



Have your leader or a member of your group read the Prayer of Belonging aloud to close your time together.

Prayer of Belonging

God, we want to know deeply who *You* say You are. In knowing You more fully, we find our identity and belonging in You. As our hearts long to fit in or feel fulfilled, we will trust in *You*. Through the roles You play in our lives, the relationships You have with us, and by Your very nature, we understand how we belong to You.

Thank You for paying such a high price to make us Your own. Thank You for being a Father to our orphan hearts. Thank You for being our first love. Thank You for creating each of us with a purpose to live with assignment and authority under Your Son Jesus' leading and instruction. Thank You for shepherding our wandering souls. Thank You for grafting us into Your family and pruning us so that we flourish.

We want to know who You are so intimately that the joy we experience overflows from understanding how we belong to You. And, God, above all, we echo the words Paul wrote in the book of Philippians, chapter 3, verse 12: "... I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ..." We open our hearts. Will You open our eyes and ears as well? In Jesus' name, Amen.

Filling Up With



As you continue on your journey between gatherings, the following pages are intentionally meant for you to enjoy the content by engaging in activities, prayers, and reading. This isn't academic homework but material that's fully alive and relevant to your daily experience!

THE NAMES WE GO BY

In the space provided, write down names in your life that you accept and respond to. Spend some time with God talking through each name on the list. As you do, write down your reflections. How do you feel when responding to that name? What does it make you feel about who you are? What does it reveal about belonging?

Name	Reflection

Name	Reflection

When you are done, ask God what name (or names) of belonging He wants to highlight for you personally. Listen for a while and write down what He says and how you feel about it.

Name	Reflection

FINDING YOURSELF

In the following word search, find all the names that God gives us as believers. When you are done, pick two or three names that stand out to you the most, look up the verse, and write it in the space provided. Or if you hate word searches, just go straight to picking the God-given names that stand out to you the most!



Image of God

(Genesis 1:27)

New Creation

(2 Corinthians 5:17)

Children

(1 John 3:1-2)

Branches

(John 15:5)

Beloved

(1 John 4:7)

Living Stones

(1 Peter 2:5)

Wonderfully [Made]

(Psalm 139:13-14)

Free

(Galatians 5:1)

Body [of Christ]

(1 Corinthians 12)

God's Temple

(1 Corinthians 3:16)

Citizen [in God's Kingdom]

(Philippians 3:20)

Masterpiece

(Ephesians 2:10, NLT)

Write out the names that stood out and the entire verse associated with it in the space below:

Name _____

Scripture

Name _____

Scripture

Name _____

Scripture

“A deep sense of love and belonging is an irreducible need of all people. We are biologically, cognitively, physically, and spiritually wired to love, to be loved, and to belong. When those needs are not met, we don’t function as we were meant to. We break. We fall apart. We numb. We ache. We hurt others. We get sick.”

—Brené Brown



Answers can be found in the back of this book on page 129.

TALK TO GOD

Spend some time just talking with God about where you feel like you belong the most and where you feel like you belong the least in your life right now. Tell Him about what you feel, the thoughts you have, and the way you act in response to each situation. Ask Him what He might want to show you about yourself or that situation. If it is helpful, use the space provided below.

Where I Belong Most

Thoughts:

Feelings:

Actions:

God, what do you want to show me?

Where I Belong Least

Thoughts:

Feelings:

Actions:

God, what do you want to show me?



For all you overachievers out there, here are some chapters in the Bible that will help you to think more deeply about belonging. If you have some extra time, you should definitely check them out!

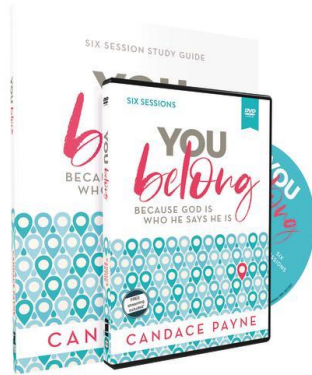
Psalm 100

John 10

1 Peter 2

Psalm 139

After you have read each chapter, write down what you learned about belonging to God.



YOU *belong*

By Candace Payne

BEST NEWS – Belonging has nothing to do with us at all!

There is a question at the core of every longing we have for fulfillment, abundance, freedom, joy and connection. And that question is, “Do I belong?”

Sometimes our biggest questions are answered in ways we just didn’t consider. With insight and exuberance, Bible study teacher Candace Payne walks through the five ways God names Himself in relation to us and how each name adds a layer of truth to how we belong. It has nothing to do with us, but everything to do with Him and He meets us at every turn to prove it.

In this six-session video Bible study, dig deep into the characteristics of the God who claims us, considers us, names us, and loves us. Understanding who we are through who God says He is erases all the boxes we’ve put ourselves and others into and unleashes joy-filled freedom.

This study challenges groups to get honest and real in their discussion time and to explore the truth in what Scripture says about who God is and what that means about us. It also includes personal “fun work” instead of homework that will inspire you to think differently and respond to all things more like a true Child of God.

[**LEARN MORE**](#)