

A photograph of a person sitting on a hill, looking out over a sunset. The sky is a mix of purple, pink, and orange, with some clouds. The person is silhouetted against the bright light of the setting sun.

GOD IS...

WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

BIBLE STUDIES FOR ASHFIELD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
ASHFIELDPRESBYTERIAN.ORG.AU

KNOWING GOD


Despite what the new atheists would have us believe, most people believe in God. This has been true in every age and every culture. For example, a 2009 Nielsen survey found that 68% of Australians believed in god, or a “universal spirit”. But opinions differ about what he is like.

Can we **know** what God is like?

The Bible says that we can know God. In the Bible, God has spoken to us, telling us what he’s like, how he acts, and what he requires of us. It tells us that even though he is very different to us, he made us to be connected to him. This is our goal in life, and our reason for living.

Most importantly, the Bible introduces us to Jesus, the living Word, the eternal God come in human flesh (John 1:14), the visible image of an invisible God (Colossians 1:15). As we see and understand Jesus, we see and understand God the Father who sent him (John 14:9). As we trust Jesus, we’re trusting God the Father (John 12:44-45).

In John 17:3 Jesus prayed, “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” This is our prayer too- that you would know God, and his Son Jesus, and so know eternal life.



GOD HAS SPOKEN BY
CHRIST JESUS. CHRIST THE
EVERLASTING SON.
BRIGHTNESS OF THE
FATHER'S GLORY. WITH
THE FATHER EVER ONE.
SPOKEN BY THE WORD
INCARNATE. GOD OF GOD
ERE TIME BEGAN. LIGHT
OF LIGHT TO EARTH
DESCENDING. MAN
REVEALING GOD TO MAN

G.W. BRIGGS, 1875-1959

At times in these studies we will quote from the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647), the Westminster Shorter Catechism and Larger Catechism (1647), and the Heidelberg Catechism (1563). These are historic documents that summarise Biblical teaching, and organise it in a way that makes it easier to teach people. This first quote summarises what the Bible teaches us about God.

Westminster Confession of Faith: Ch 2.1 There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts¹, or passions², immutable³, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory, most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal most just and terrible in his judgments; hating all sin; and who will by no means clear the guilty.

1 – his personality and qualities are perfectly integrated, so that nothing in Him is in conflict

2 - the sufferings humans experience (Acts 14:15; James 5:17)

3 - unable to be changed (James 1:17; Malachi 3:6)

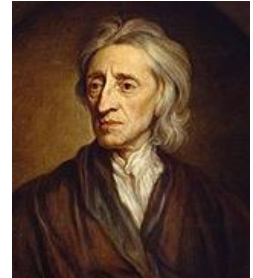
1. GOD SPEAKS (HEBREWS 1:1-4)

2. **Read Psalm 19.** According to the Psalm, what two ways does God speak to us? Which one is better? Why?



3. Deists believe that God can only be known by human observation and reason. He doesn't involve himself in his world, either in action or communication. This movement was most popular during the Enlightenment, but declined in popularity towards the end of the 18th century. Many people today, however, are functional deists in their view of God.

If God was like this, what would it mean for the way you experience the world? (eg suffering, purpose, prayer, guidance, hope, sin, justice)



John Locke (1632-1704) was a famous English physician, philosopher and influential deist

4. **Read Romans 1:18-21.** What can be known about God from his creation?

What has humanity done with this knowledge?

What is God doing in response to this? Is this just?

What does this passage say to the way deists understand God?

THE WRITTEN WORD

5. Read this section of chapter 1 of the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF)

WCF Ch 1

I. Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation; therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his Church; and afterwards for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased.

This tells us that, in addition to his works of creation and providence, God has revealed himself in various ways. He has used dreams, angelic messengers, audible voices, even a burning bush and a donkey! He communicates with words that people can understand. According to this paragraph from the WCF, what is deficient about his communication through creation and providence alone?

The second half of the paragraph describes holy Scripture (the Bible). What reasons are given for why God caused his revelations about himself and his will to be committed to writing?

6. Read this section from Ch 1 of WCF

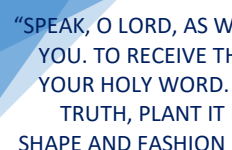
WCF Ch 1.VI. The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.

What are God's purposes for Scripture?

7. **Read 1 Peter 1:22-2:3.** What does God's word do?

What should our attitude be towards it?

How can you do this better?



"SPEAK, O LORD, AS WE COME TO YOU. TO RECEIVE THE FOOD OF YOUR HOLY WORD. TAKE YOUR TRUTH, PLANT IT DEEP IN US; SHAPE AND FASHION US IN YOUR LIKENESS, THAT THE LIGHT OF CHRIST MIGHT BE SEEN TODAY IN OUR ACTS OF LOVE AND OUR DEEDS OF FAITH. SPEAK, O LORD, AND FULFILL IN US ALL YOUR PURPOSES, FOR YOUR GLORY"

KEITH GETTY &
STUART TOWNEND
CCLI#151013

THE INCARNATE WORD

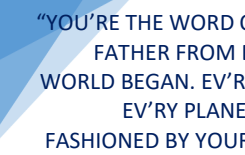
8. As good as God's written word is, he has given us a better communication, the incarnate Word, Jesus. **Read Hebrews 1:1-4.** What do we learn about the Son in these verses?

9. According to Jesus, in John 14:6-7, how do people come to know God the Father?

GOD & US

10. If Jesus is everything that Hebrews 1:1-4 says he is, what is the application for us, according to Hebrews 2:1-4?

How, practically, can you do that better?



"YOU'RE THE WORD OF GOD THE FATHER FROM BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN. EV'RY STAR AND EV'RY PLANET HAS BEEN FASHIONED BY YOUR HAND. ALL CREATION HOLDS TOGETHER BY THE POWER OF YOUR VOICE. LET THE SKIES DECLARE YOUR GLORY; LET THE LAND AND SEAS REJOICE! YOU'RE THE AUTHOR OF CREATION YOU'RE THE LORD OF EV'RY MAN; AND YOUR CRY OF LOVE RINGS OUT ACROSS THE LANDS.

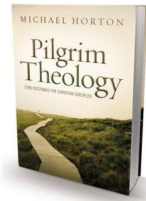
KEITH GETTY &
STUART TOWNEND
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PRAYER POINTS

2. GOD IS THREE IN ONE

Hint: This is a long study. If your time is limited, move through the first two sections (questions 1-6) quickly. Try to spend at least half your time in the third section, God and Us, (questions 7-11).

“The doctrine of the Trinity – God as one in essence and three in person – shapes and structures Christian faith and practice in every way, distinguishing it from all world religions.” Michael Horton, *Pilgrim Theology*, 89.



THE BIBLICAL EVIDENCE

1. What do we learn from the following verses about the understanding, of both Old Testament and New Testament believers, that there was one God?

Deuteronomy 6:4-5	
1 Tim 2:5	

2. What do the following verses teach about the relationship between the Son and the Father?

John 1:1	
John 8:58	
John 10:30	
John 14:9-11	

3. How do the following verses provide evidence that Jesus embodies all that the Father is and does?

Mark 2:5-11	
John 5:16-18	
John 5:21	
John 5:23	
John 20:28	
Colossians 1:15-17	
Revelation 5:13	

4. In the following verses, how do we see each person of the Trinity identified?

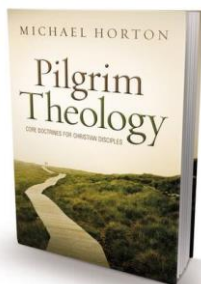
Romans 8:9, 11	
John 14:23, 26	

5. As the Father, the Son and the Spirit, “our God is above us, before us, and within us.” Henry Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:260. How do the following verses show that the three persons of the Trinity have different functions?

Matthew 3:16-17	
1 Corinthians 12:4-6	
2 Corinthians 1:21-22	
Hebrews 9:14	
1 Peter 1:2	

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

The term “Trinity” is not in the Bible, but is the result of early Christians putting all the Biblical evidence together.



“Far from renouncing the God of Israel, the earliest Christians believed that they were worshiping the God of their father and mothers. Yet there they were, faced with Jesus as God the Son in human flesh and God the Spirit descending and indwelling. There they were, being baptised – at Christ’s behest – in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and being blessed with benedictions from the Trinity. ‘One God, three persons’: the formula was implicit already, but became explicit through hard-fought battles (in post-Apostolic debates in the third century).” Horton, *Pilgrim Theology*, 93-94.

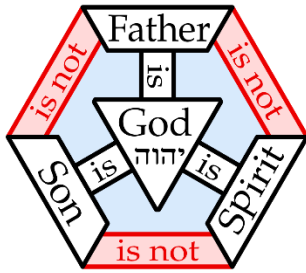
6. This paragraph from the *Westminster Confession of Faith* summarises the orthodox Christian view on the nature of God as Trinity.

WCF2.III In the unity of the Godhead there be three Persons* of one substance*, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.

*“The two key words here are essence/substance and persons. When you read “essence”, think ‘Godness’. All three Persons of the Trinity share the same ‘Godness’. One is not more ‘God’ than another... When you read ‘persons’, think ‘a particular individual, distinct from the others.’ Theologians use these terms because they are trying to find a way to express the relationship of three beings that are equally and uniquely God, but not three Gods.” Kevin DeYoung

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/the-doctrine-of-the-trinity-no-christianity-without-it/>





According to this paragraph from the WCF, what views about God are *wrong*? (eg that there are three Gods)

GOD & US: WHY THE TRINITY IS RELEVANT

God is three in one, each person mutually indwelling the others. The Father loves the Son, the Son honours the Father, the Father sends the Son and the Spirit. It has been this way from all eternity. God is relationship. (Is this what it means that God is love, rather than just God is loving?) God existed and knew the joy of relationship before anything else existed. He is complete, and does not need us to express love. Theologians use the term *perichoresis* to describe this inter-relationship.

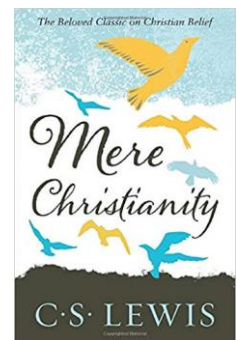


The Trinity is not abstract theology. It is vitally important for the Christian life.

A. GOD INVITES US INTO THE RELATIONSHIP THAT IS WITHIN HIMSELF

7. **Read John 14:15-20 and John 15:4-5.** Jesus is talking to his disciples. What is Jesus describing? Can you describe it in terms of the Trinity?

“The whole dance, or drama, or pattern of this three-Personal life is to be played out in each one of us: or (putting it the other way round) each one of us has got to enter that pattern, take his place in that dance. There is no other way to the happiness for which we were made... If you want joy, power, peace, eternal life, you must get close to, or even into, the thing that has them... Once a man is united to God, how could he not live forever?... But how is he to be united to God? How is it possible for us to be taken into the three-Personal life?... Now the whole offer which Christianity makes is this: that we can, if we let God have His way, come to share in the life of Christ. If we do, we shall then be sharing a life which was begotten, not made, which always has existed and always will exist. Christ is the Son of God. If we share in this kind of life we also shall be sons of God... Every Christian is to become a little Christ. The whole purpose of becoming a Christian is simply nothing else.” CS Lewis, “Good Infection”, *Mere Christianity*



8. Paul uses the language of **adoption** to describe how God joins us to himself. “In Christ we are brought into the very family of God. Romans 8:9-17 explains how the Spirit Christians receive is one of ‘sonship’, one that enables us to cry out “Abba, Father!” It is not because we are created human beings that we can address God as Father; it is because we share in the Son-ship of Jesus by being his “co-heirs”—by having within us the Spirit of Christ himself. Only then can we can we truly call God ‘Father’” Michael Jensen
<http://thebriefing.com.au/2000/07/the-very-practical-doctrine-of-the-trinity/>



Read Romans 8:9-17. What is Paul describing? What benefits come from being God’s children?

B. PRAYER IS AN EXPERIENCE OF THE TRINITY

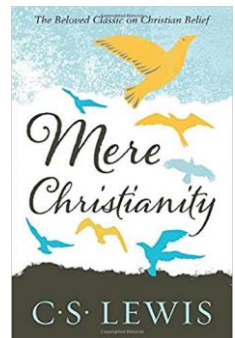
9. A common description of prayer is that we pray to the Father through the Son by the Spirit. What do the following verses say about the role the persons of the Trinity play in prayer?

Ephesians 5:20	
Matthew 6:9	
1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 10:19-22	
Romans 8:15, 26-27	

Does this reflect your experience of prayer?

How we experience the Trinity in prayer:

“What I mean is this. An ordinary simple Christian kneels down to say his prayers. He is trying to get into touch with God. But if he is a Christian he knows that what is prompting him to pray is also God: God, so to speak, inside him. But he also knows that all his real knowledge of God comes through Christ, the Man who was God—that Christ is standing beside him, helping him to pray, praying for him. You see what is happening. God is the thing to which he is praying—the goal he is trying to reach. God is also the thing inside him which is pushing him on—the motive power. God is also the road or bridge along which he is being pushed to that goal. So that the whole threefold life of the three-personal Being is actually going on in that ordinary little bedroom where an ordinary man is saying his prayers. CS Lewis, “The Three-Personal God”, *Mere Christianity*



C. THE TRINITY IS THE MEDIUM, MODEL & FOUNDATION FOR CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY


10. Humanity, created in the image of the triune God, is designed for relationship (Genesis 1:26-27).

Read 1 John 1:2-4. “The life appeared” is probably a reference to the resurrected Jesus. What is the basis for, or foundation of, our fellowship with one another?

What is the outcome of this fellowship?

How have you experienced this joy in fellowship?

11. **Read John 17:20-23.** Can you put in your own words, or perhaps draw a diagram that shows, the inter-relationships Jesus is describing here?



"HOLY, HOLY, HOLY
LORD, GOD ALMIGHTY
ALL THY WORKS SHALL PRAISE THY
NAME IN EARTH AND SKY AND SEA
HOLY, HOLY, HOLY
MERCIFUL AND MIGHTY
GOD IN THREE PERSONS BLESSED
TRINITY"

REGINALD HEBER, 1783-1826

What, practically, does it mean that all believers will be one?

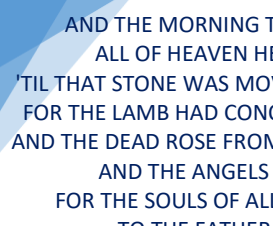
How can the one-ness of the Father and Son be a model for our one-ness?

How can we be brought to complete unity?

Author Mark Shaw (*Doing Theology with Huck & Jim*, p62) identifies four characteristics about the Trinity in John's Gospel: 1) full equality, 2) glad submission, 3) joyful intimacy, and 4) mutual deference. (John 1:1; 3:35; 5:18; 14:13, 16; 17:21-26ff.) How can these characteristics inform healthy relationships with one another?

PRAYER POINTS

Praise the Trinitarian God for his work of salvation




AND THE MORNING THAT YOU ROSE
ALL OF HEAVEN HELD ITS BREATH
'TIL THAT STONE WAS MOVED FOR GOOD
FOR THE LAMB HAD CONQUERED DEATH
AND THE DEAD ROSE FROM THEIR TOMBS
AND THE ANGELS STOOD IN AWE
FOR THE SOULS OF ALL WHO'D COME
TO THE FATHER ARE RESTORED
AND THE CHURCH OF CHRIST WAS BORN
THEN THE SPIRIT LIT THE FLAME
NOW THIS GOSPEL TRUTH OF OLD
SHALL NOT KNEEL, SHALL NOT FAINT
BY HIS BLOOD AND IN HIS NAME
IN HIS FREEDOM I AM FREE
FOR THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST
WHO HAS RESURRECTED ME
PRAISE THE FATHER, PRAISE THE SON
PRAISE THE SPIRIT, THREE IN ONE
GOD OF GLORY, MAJESTY
PRAISE FOREVER TO THE KING OF KINGS

JASON INGRAM, SCOTT & BROOKE
LIGERTWOOD CCLI#151013

3. GOD IS INFINITE

As human beings, we have limitations. We exist in one place, at one time. There are limits to what we can make, understand, carry, see and hear. However God has no limits.

1. **Read Isaiah 40:12-31.** What do we learn about God's qualities?



"IMMORTAL, INVISIBLE,
GOD ONLY WISE,
IN LIGHT INACCESSIBLE
HID FROM OUR EYES,
MOST BLESSED, MOST GLORIOUS,
THE ANCIENT OF DAYS,
ALMIGHTY, VICTORIOUS, THY
GREAT NAME WE PRAISE"

WALTER CHALMERS SMITH,
1814-1908

How do we compare?

How do idols compare?


What attitude towards God does the writer encourage us to have?

2. Read the following paragraph from the Westminster Confession of Faith.

WCF2.II. God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of himself; and is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them; he is the alone foundation of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom, are all things; and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever himself pleaseth. In his sight all things are open and manifest; his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature; so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain. He is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands. To him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience he is pleased to require of them.

What does it teach us about God's intrinsic qualities (those qualities basic to his nature, not connected to anything else)?

What does it teach us about God in relation to his world?



ANCIENT OF DAYS
"THOUGH THE NATIONS RAGE,
"KINGDOMS RISE AND FALL THERE IS
STILL ONE KING REIGNING OVER ALL SO I
WILL NOT FEAR FOR THIS TRUTH
REMAINS: THAT MY GOD IS THE
ANCIENT OF DAYS NONE ABOVE HIM,
NONE BEFORE HIM, ALL OF TIME IN HIS
HANDS. FOR HIS THRONE IT SHALL
REMAIN AND EVER STAND ALL THE
POWER, ALL THE GLORY I WILL TRUST IN
HIS NAME. FOR MY GOD IS THE ANCIENT
OF DAYS

JONNY ROBINSON, RICH THOMPSON,
MICHAEL FARREN, JESSE REEVES
CCLI#151013

3. What do the following verses teach about the infinite nature of God's character and qualities?
How do we see Jesus reflecting this same character and qualities?

Quality	Verse	God	Verse	Jesus
Eternal	Isaiah 44:6		John 8:58	
Immutable (unchanging)	Numbers 23:19		Hebrews 13:8	
Omnipotent (all powerful)	Jeremiah 32:17		Matthew 28:18	
Omnipresent (everywhere present)	Jeremiah 23:23-24		John 1:1 Matthew 28:20	
Omniscient (knowing everything)	Psalms 147:5		John 16:30	

THE INFINITE GOD & US

4. For each of the following verses, identify the characteristic of God, and what the practical implication of that is for us.

Verse	Characteristic of God	Implication for us
Isaiah 40:28-31		
Psalms 139:7-18		
Matthew 6:6-8		
Matthew 19:23-26		
Hebrews 13:5-6		
Revelation 21:4-6		

What, from the verses above, gives you reason to praise God?

PRAYER POINTS

4. GOD IS CREATOR & SUSTAINER

1. **Read Psalm 104.** Which verses talk about God creating? What do they teach us?



ALL CREATURES OF OUR GOD AND KING
LIFT UP YOUR VOICE AND WITH US SING
O PRAISE HIM! ALLELUIA!
THOU, BURNING SUN WITH GOLDEN BEAM
THOU, SILVER MOON WITH SOFTER GLEAM
O PRAISE HIM! O PRAISE HIM!
ALLELUIA! ALLELUIA! ALLELUIA!

AFTER FRANCIS OF ASSISI 1182-1226
W.H.DRAPER 1855-1933

Which verses talk about God sustaining? What do they teach us?

How does the Psalmist respond to God? What is *your* response?

Any idea what the connection is with sinners in v35?

2. **Read Acts 17:24-31.** God not only created the natural world, he made human beings and institutions. What aspects of humanity does Paul mention specifically (v26)

Why did God make humans (v27)? What does he require of us in response?

According to **Revelation 4:10-11**, why does God deserve glory, honour and power?

3. According to **Hebrews 1:3-4** and **Colossians 1:16-17**, what part does Jesus play in creating and sustaining the world?

GOD & US

4. Read the following three questions from the Heidelberg Catechism.

Heidelberg Catechism 26. Q. What do you believe when you say: I believe in God the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth? A. That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who out of nothing created heaven and earth and all that is in them, and who still upholds and governs them by His eternal counsel and providence, is, for the sake of Christ His Son, my God and my Father. In Him I trust so completely as to have no doubt that He will provide me with all things necessary for body and soul, and will also turn to my good whatever adversity He sends me in this life of sorrow. He is able to do so as almighty God, and willing also as a faithful Father.

27. Q. What do you understand by the providence of God? A. God's providence is His almighty and ever present power, whereby, as with His hand, He still upholds heaven and earth and all creatures, and so governs them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, food and drink, health and sickness, riches and poverty, indeed, all things, come not by chance but by His fatherly hand.

28. Q. What does it benefit us to know that God has created all things and still upholds them by His providence? A. We can be patient in adversity, thankful in prosperity, and with a view to the future we can have a firm confidence in our faithful God and Father that no creature shall separate us from His love; for all creatures are so completely in His hand that without His will they cannot so much as move.

Which phrase in these answers gives you most joy? Why?

5. What evidence does Jesus provide for us not to worry in Luke 12:22-31?

What attitudes is Jesus encouraging YOU to have?

PRAYER POINTS

5. GOD IS JUDGE

Many people are repulsed by the notion that God will judge us. However a certainty that our actions will, one day, be called to account makes a big difference in how we live our lives.

1. How do you feel about the thought of God judging you?
2. God's judgment is a central part of Christian belief. See Hebrews 9.27. Read the following quote from Australian Biblical scholar Leon Morris. What difference does it make to how you live knowing that God's just judgment is coming?

"The doctrine of final judgment... stresses man's accountability and the certainty that justice will finally triumph over all the wrongs which are part and parcel of life here and now. The former gives a dignity to the humblest action, the latter brings calmness and assurance to those in the thick of the battle. This doctrine gives meaning to life... The Christian view of judgment means that history moves to a goal... Judgment protects the idea of the triumph of God and of good. It is unthinkable that the present conflict between good and evil should last throughout eternity. Judgment means that evil will be disposed of authoritatively, decisively, finally. Judgment means that in the end God's Will will be perfectly done." (Leon Morris, *The Biblical Doctrine of Judgment*, p. 72)



3. Each of the following verses highlights an aspect of God's character related to his judgment. What does each aspect contribute to the nature of his judgment?

a. God is our **Creator** (Jeremiah 18:1-10)

b. God is **righteous** (Genesis 18:25; Ps 33:4-5; Nehemiah 9:32-33. 1 John 1:5)

c. God **sees everything** (Ecclesiastes 12:14)

d. God is **infinitely wise** (Jeremiah 17:10)

e. God is **infinitely powerful** (Revelation 6:15-17; Psalm 110:5-6)

f. God is **patient**, so it can appear, at the moment, as if he is unjust (2 Peter 3:9-10).

WHILE I DRAW THIS FLEETING BREATH,
WHEN MINE EYES SHALL CLOSE IN DEATH,
WHEN I SOAR TO WORLDS UNKNOWN,
SEE THEE ON THY JUDGMENT THRONE,
ROCK OF AGES, CLEFT FOR ME,
LET ME HIDE MYSELF IN THEE

AUGUSTUS MONTAGUE TOPLADY 1740-78

4. Another related characteristic is that God is **jealous**¹ for his own glory/name/reputation (Ezekiel 39:25), and for our loyalty and obedience. **Read Exodus 20:4-5; 34:14; Zechariah 1:12-17.** How is God's jealousy connected to his role as judge??

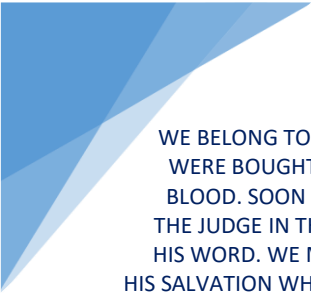
What attitudes should this stir in us (Ephesians 1:12; Romans 12:11; 2 Corinthians 11:2)?

5. What will the day of judgment be like (Romans 2:5-11; Revelation 20:11-15)?

What two possible outcomes are there of God's judgment?

On what basis are these two groups determined?

6. What part does Jesus play in judgment day (Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:22, 27; Acts 10:42; 17:31)?



WE BELONG TO THE DAY, WE
WERE BOUGHT WITH JESUS'
BLOOD. SOON HE COMES AS
THE JUDGE IN THE POWER OF
HIS WORD. WE MUST TELL OF
HIS SALVATION WHILE WE WAIT.
FOR THE DAY WHEN JESUS
COMES WILL BE TOO LATE
STRONG AS A MIGHTY ROCK,
OUR REFUGE
IN THE COMING WRATH.
THE HEART OF THE BRIDE
BELONGS TO JESUS, JESUS
THE EARTH IN ITS TURNING
STOPS TO MARVEL AT THE SON
OF GOD. AND ALL OF THAT DAY
BELONGS TO JESUS, JESUS

MICHAEL MORROW
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¹ This is different to being envious. Envy is to want what belongs to someone else. Jealousy is to want what rightly belongs to you.

GOD & US

7. **Read Romans 12:17-21.** How does the certainty of God's just judgment release you from *the need to take revenge*?

What practical steps can you take towards having a right response when someone hurts you?

8. **Read 1 Peter 4:12-19.** What perspective does God's judgment give for *the Christian who suffers*?

What practical steps can you take towards obeying the command of v19?

9. **Read Hebrews 10:32-39.** How does the promise of God's reward *motivate us to persevere*?

10. **Read 2 Peter 3:8-15.** What does the delay in God's judgment show us about God's character?

What motivation does God's coming judgment provide for

a. *Evangelism*?

b. *Godly living*?

PRAYER POINTS

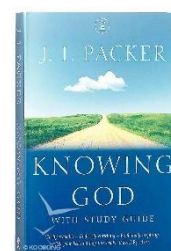
6. GOD IS LOVE

1. **Read 1 John 4:7-21.** John states twice that God is love (v8 & 16). How does this differ from saying that God is loving?

What is the main point John is making in this section?

2. John also records two other similar statements about God. God is *light* (1 John 1:5), and God is *spirit* (John 4:24). In the quote below, J.I. Packer attempts to show how these two descriptions of God influence the character and display of his love. How does God's love differ from the way we love?

“‘God is love’ is not the complete truth about God so far as the Bible is concerned. It is not an abstract definition which stands alone, but a summing up, from the believer’s standpoint, of what the whole revelation set forth in Scripture tells us about its Author... The love of the God who is Spirit (John 4:24) is no fitful, fluctuating thing, as the love of man is, nor is it a mere impotent longing for things that may never be; it is, rather, a spontaneous determination of God’s whole being in an attitude of benevolence and benefaction, an attitude freely chosen and firmly fixed... The God who is love is first and foremost light (1 John 1:5), and sentimental ideas of His love as an indulgent, benevolent softness, divorced from moral standards and concerns, must therefore be ruled out from the start. God’s love is holy love.” J.I. Packer, “The Love of God”, *Knowing God*.



3. From the following verses, what qualities and actions of God are connected with his love?

Exodus 34:6-7	
Isaiah 54:6-8	
Ps 86:5-7	
Prov 3:12	
Romans 9:15-18	
Ephesians 2:4-5	
Titus 3:4-7	
1 John 3:1	

4. Does God express his love differently for his children compared with the rest of the world? In what ways? **Read John 3:16; Matthew 5:44-45; Ephesians 1:4-5.**
5. We sing the song, “Jesus loves me, this I know. For the Bible tells me so.” **Read John 15:9-17 and Ephesians 5:25-27.** What do we learn about the love Jesus has for us?

6. What do the following verses say about how God demonstrates his love to us?

John 3:16

1 John 4:9-11

Romans 5:7-8

GOD & US

7. From the following verses, what are the practical implications of God's love for us?

Romans 8:37-39	
Galatians 2:20	
Ephesians 5:25-33	
Hebrews 12:4-13	
1 John 4:7, 19	
1 John 4:20	

8. **Read Romans 5:1-5.** Verse 5 says that we experience God's love through his Holy Spirit. What reasons do these verses give for our joy as we experience God's love?
9. Read Paul's prayer for the Ephesians in **Ephesians 3:16-19**. Why is it important for us to know how much Jesus loves us?
10. Read the following quote from J.I. Packer. Which question is most relevant and challenging for you to consider?

"Is it true that God is love to me as a Christian? And does the love of God mean all that has been said? If so, certain questions arise. Why do I ever grumble and show discontent and resentment at the circumstances in which God has placed me? Why am I ever distrustful, fearful or depressed? Why do I ever allow myself to grow cool, formal and half-hearted in the service of the God who loves me so? Why do I ever allow my loyalties to be divided, so that God has not all my heart?"
J.I. Packer, "The Love of God", *Knowing God*.

WHAT LOVE MY GOD
WHAT LOVE MY GOD WOULD SEND THE
WAY OF LIFE, TO WALK THE ROAD, REJECTED
AND DESPISED? THAT YOU MIGHT KNOW
THE WEAKNESS I POSSESS AND BE MY ROCK
OF STRENGTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS?

O YOUR LOVE MY GOD LIKE A FLOOD AS
HEAVEN OPENED UP POURING OUT ON US O
PRAISE THE KING WHO CAME TO THE
WORLD IN HIS LOVE LIKE A MIGHTY FLOOD

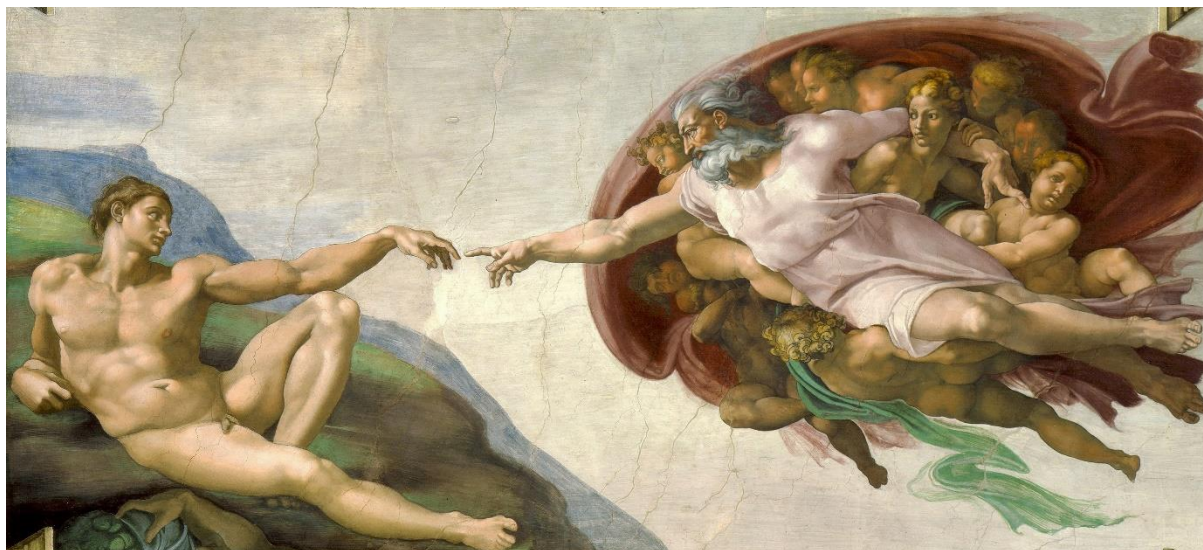
WHAT LOVE MY GOD COULD HOLD YOU TO
THE TREE TO BEAR THAT OVERWHELMING
DEBT FOR ME? THE SON OF HEAVEN LEAVES
THE FATHER'S SIDE. THE HEALER BLEEDS,
THE LIFE WAS MADE TO DIE!

PRAYER POINTS

JONNY ROBINSON, MICHAEL FARREN, & RICK
THOMPSON
CCLI#151013

7. GOD & US

God made us to be in a relationship with him. Sin broke that connection. The story of the Bible is how God restores that relationship. The Bible begins with God walking in the garden looking for Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:8-9). It finishes (Revelation 22:1-5) with the throne of God and the Lamb in the middle of the new Jerusalem (representing God's people). In between there are many ways of describing that relationship, and what God does to restore it.



The purpose of our life is to obtain this relationship and then to live in the light of it. This (earthly) life is only the beginning of that relationship, and a shadow of its eternal reality.

PICTURES OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND HUMANITY:

The Bible uses many different pictures to describe the rich relationship. For each of the following images, read the verses, then answer the question: what does this image teach us about God, and the nature of the relationship he makes with us?

1. **COVENANT:** An agreement that God initiates with people in which he makes commitments to do certain things. It sets out the conditions of a relationship. They often correspond to the covenant between a great king and his subject king (Suzerain-vassal) (Genesis 17:7-8; Jeremiah 31:31-34).
2. **SACRIFICE AND ATONEMENT:** God can be approached only when his wrath against our sin is satisfied (atoned for) by sacrifice – the death of an animal in the Old Testament (Leviticus 16:15-17), and by Jesus, once for all, in the New Testament (1 John 2:2; Romans 3:25-26; Hebrews 9:12-14).
3. **REDEMPTION:** This is the image of buying out of slavery (Exodus 6:6; Deuteronomy 7:7-8). This is extended in the New Testament to include redeeming from the slavery of sin and death (Ephesians 1:7; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Hebrews 9:12).



4. **SALVATION:** God rescues from earthly situations, like famine, slavery and danger. In the New Testament this grows to include eternal salvation from God's judgment (Matthew 1:21; Acts 4:12; Romans 1:16; Ephesians 2:8).
5. **ADOPTION:** This image emphasises God's choice in bringing us into his family, and the existing relationship we now have with our Father. This affects our thankfulness and confidence in prayer, and includes the promise of our inheritance (Exodus 4:22; Deuteronomy 14:1-2; John 1:12-13; Romans 8:14-17; Ephesians 1:5).
6. **JUSTIFICATION:** This image is from the law court, and is to do with a legal declaration of being right/righteous (Genesis 15:6; Romans 3:23-24; Philippians 3:9).
7. **CLEANSING/ PURIFICATION:** This image emphasises how sin defiles us. The language is borrowed from the temple, in terms of things that are clean or unclean. A clean conscience is a wonderful thing! (Psalm 51:2; Ezekiel 36:25; Zechariah 13:1; Ephesians 5:26; Hebrews 9:14; 10:22; 1 John 1:7).
8. **FORGIVENESS:** God forgives sin committed against him when we repent. He is able to do this, and remain righteous, because of the work of Jesus (paid a price to redeem, made a sacrifice to cleanse, took a punishment to justify). Recognising the debt we've been forgiven profoundly affects the way we treat others (Micah 7:18-19; Ephesians 1:7; 1 John 1:9; Ephesians 4:31-32).
9. **RECONCILIATION:** This is similar to forgiveness, but the emphasis is on the restoration of a broken relationship so that peace is restored. It is God who makes the first move. This has implications for our relationships with each other (Colossians 1:20-22; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, Romans 5:1; Ephesians 1:14-18).
10. **REGENERATION:** This image of being brought from death to life emphasises the complete transformation God makes in someone, as well as our own inability to effect it ourselves. (Ezekiel 37:3-5; Ephesians 2:5; 2 Corinthians 5:17)



11. **MARRIAGE:** In the Old Testament God uses the metaphor of a husband and wife to describe Israel's unfaithfulness in pursuing other gods (Isaiah 54:4-8; Hosea 2:16, 19-20). Jesus' relationship with his church is described as that of husband and wife (Ephesians 5:23, 25-27, 32; 2 Corinthians 11:2). One image of eternity is that of a wedding banquet between the Lamb and the saints (Revelation 19:7-9; 21:2).



12. **REBIRTH:** This image of receiving new birth emphasises the new life and nature we have, and our helplessness without God. (John 3:3; Titus 3:5; 1 John 3:9)



13. **UNION:** There are two ideas here. First, we are in Christ in the sense that he is our representative (Ephesians 1:13; 2:6), who lives the perfect life for us (Philippians 3:9a), and dies to sin for us. God joins us to Jesus by faith (Philippians 3:9b), and, as a result, we are counted righteous (1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21), and die to sin and live to righteousness (Romans 6:3-8). Second, this means that we are spiritually joined to Jesus. He is in us, by his Spirit (John 14:23). And we are commanded to remain in him – to obey his commands and follow him (John 15:4-5, 7-10).



GOD & US

Which of the metaphors above do you find most comforting? Most challenging? Most uncomfortable?

How might these many metaphors help enrich our relationship with God throughout our lifetime?

WONDER OF THE CROSS
 1. THE GREATEST LOVE SONG,
 THE GREATEST STORY
 THE KING OF HEAVEN POURED INTO A MAN
 SO HELPLESS SINNERS CAN FIND FORGIVENESS
 BORN FOR OUR SALVATION,
 GOD'S REDEMPTION PLAN

2. THE CURSE OF SIN PLACED UPON HIS SHOULDERS
 ALL OUR OFFENCES, JESUS CHOSE TO BEAR
 GOD'S PERFECT JUDGEMENT IN LOVE WAS RENDERED
 DARKNESS WAS DEFEATED,
 DEATH WAS SHATTERED THERE

OH THE WONDER, THE WONDER OF THE CROSS
 THE LOVE OF JESUS POURING OUT FOR US
 "IT IS FINISHED!" IN VICTORY, HE CRIED
 AS HE ROSE HE RAISED US BACK TO LIFE
 YOU'VE RAISED US BACK TO LIFE

3. NOW WE'RE INVITED TO SWEET COMMUNION
 WE ARE UNITED IN HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS
 PARTICIPATION IN DEATH AND GLORY
 JESUS OUR BEGINNING, CHRIST OUR ONLY END


4. SUCH PRECIOUS MERCY, THIS NEW BEGINNING
 NO CONDEMNATION NOW FOR ME TO FEAR
 WHERE SIN ENTANGLED, YOU HAVE DELIVERED
 HEAR THE SOUND OF FREEDOM
 RISING FROM THE GRAVE

PRAYER POINTS:

NATHAN & LOUISE FELLINGHAM
 CLI#151103

8. GOD IS ENOUGH

1. **Read Psalm 23.** What is David confident that God will provide for him? Why?



COME, THOU FOUNT OF EVERY BLESSING,
TUNE MY HEART TO SING THY GRACE;
STREAMS OF MERCY, NEVER CEASING,
CALL FOR SONGS OF LOUDEST PRAISE

ROBERT ROBINSON


2. **Read Psalm 73:21-26.** What is God promising to provide?

Does he promise to fix up everything in your life?

What does it mean that “earth has nothing I desire besides you”? How can you make that true for yourself?

Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. God promises that his grace is sufficient for Paul. What is God promising to provide? What lessons did Paul learn from this? How will these verses influence the way you approach life?

3. In **Psalm 84**, the writer longs to be near God. What reasons does he mention for this desire in v11?



THE LORD HAS PROMISED GOOD TO ME,
HIS WORD MY HOPE SECURES;
HE WILL MY SHIELD AND PORTION BE,
AS LONG AS LIFE ENDURES.

JOHN NEWTON

4. Jesus announces that the kingdom of God belongs to those who are humble, and who look to God to provide (**Matthew 5:3-6**). He taught that such humility was the attitude God approved of (**Luke 18:9-14**), and he perfectly modelled that dependence (**John 5:19**). How can you be better displaying these attitudes in your life?

5. **Read John 1:4 and John 5:21.** Jesus is the source of life. What does this, practically, mean?

How do the images of Jesus as giving living water (John 4:10-14) and as the bread of life (John 6:35) help us understand this truth?

6. Romans 8:1-30 describes all that God, in Jesus, has given to those who are in Christ Jesus. From each of the following sections, what gifts has God given?

Section	Gifts
V1-4	
V4-13, 26-27	
V14-17	
V18-25	
V28-30	

GOD & US

7. After describing all that God has given us in v1-30, Romans 8:31 asks the question: What, then, shall we say in response to this? The answer, from v31-36, makes a series of declarations about God, and identifies a series of practical implications for us. Complete the table identifying the declarations and implications in this section.

Verse	Declaration about God	Verse	Implication for us
31b		31b	
32a		32b	
33b		33a	
34b		34a	
35a,39b		35-39	

All of this means that (v37), through him who loved us, we are more than conquerors over all that can be against us in this life. God, and the gifts he gives us, are enough for us!

Which of the implications from the table above is most precious to you?

8. The first question and answer of the Heidelberg Catechism is, justifiably, famous for its warm-hearted and large vision of all that God has done for us. Read it together, aloud. Then share a favourite phrase.

Heidelberg Catechism Q1. What is your only comfort in life and death? A. That I am not my own, but belong with body and soul, both in life and in death, to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with His precious blood, and has set me free from all the power of the devil. He also preserves me in such a way that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, all things must work together for my salvation. Therefore, by His Holy Spirit He also assures me of eternal life and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live for Him.

PRAYER POINTS: