

## Essential Truths I: Living With God

# 2 God

### Read Nehemiah 9:6

Everything in the universe was created by God's hand (**Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 11:3**). This is not just the stars and galaxies, the sun and the earth. This also includes you.

### Read Psalm 139:13-14

God is far too great for us to fully understand. He has no beginning and he has no end. But what is God really like?

The Bible reveals that God is:

### ***All-powerful***

#### Read Jeremiah 32:17

#### Read Matthew 19:26

God is all-powerful, which means that God's power is without limit and cannot be measured (**Ephesians 3:20**). The technical term for this is "omnipotence." When we say that God is *omnipotent*, we mean that he is all-powerful.

But there is something more we need to know about God's power. Not only is God all-powerful, he has the right to use that power in any way he sees fit. This is what the Bible means when it says God is "sovereign."

### Read Isaiah 40:10-29

### ***Everywhere***

#### Read Psalm 139:5,7-10

God is everywhere. His presence is not just limited to a church or cathedral. He is with you at home, at work, wherever you are. The technical term for this is "omni-

#### The Word

#### God

#### Origins

#### Jesus

#### The Cross

#### The Blood

#### Resurrection

#### Repentance

#### Grace

#### Faith

#### Water Baptism

#### Holy Spirit

#### Temptation

#### Fellowship

#### Generosity

#### Kingdom of God

#### Worship

#### Prayer

#### Eternity

#### Second Coming

#### The Call

presence.” When we say that God is *omnipresent*, we mean that he exists in all places at the same time.

## ***All-knowing***

**Read Psalm 139:1-4**

**Read 1 John 3:20**

God knows everything. His knowledge, like his power, is without limit. The technical term for this is “omniscience.” When we say that God is omniscient, we mean that there is nothing that he cannot see and nothing that he does not know. **Hebrews 4:13** tells us:

“Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”

God is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient.\* He is absolute in power, absolute in presence and absolute in knowledge. But if this is all that we know about God, we are in deep trouble. For if God knows everything, then he knows every sin I have committed. If he is everywhere, there is no place I can escape his hand. If he is all-powerful, he can judge and destroy me any time he chooses. If all we know are the *attributes* of God, and know nothing of his *nature*, we have every reason to fear him.

## **The Nature of God**

If you wanted to get to know a person, a good beginning point might be their driver’s licence. On their licence, you will find that person’s most basic description. You will see a photograph of that person, and you will discover their date of birth, their height and their address. But just holding a person’s licence in your hands does not mean that you have yet discovered them as a person. You don’t know if they are generous or self-centered, kind-hearted or cruel, peaceful or violent.

What we have discovered so far about God is like a “driver’s licence” description. We have established so far that God is the Creator of everything, and that he is:

- **All-powerful** – God is *omnipotent*
- **All-knowing** – God is *omniscient*
- **Everywhere** – God is *omnipresent*

Let’s go now beyond the “driver’s licence” description of God to discover the real Person behind the basic facts. The Bible reveals that there are two special parts to God’s character:

\* The prefix “omni-” means “all.” The words “potence” and “potent” mean “power,” and the words “science” and “scient” mean “knowledge.” Although the words “omnipotent,” “omniscient,” and “omnipresent” are good words to know, we recommend that you use them sparingly. It is much better to describe God as all-powerful than to say he is omnipotent. Remember: The basic rule in teaching is not to show how much *you* know about the subject, but to *communicate effectively* so that the hearer truly understands the subject. That means using vocabulary that the hearer himself or herself would use.

***God is holy*****Read 1 Samuel 2:2**

God is absolutely holy. This does not just mean that God cannot do evil. It also means that nothing evil is allowed to enter into God's holy presence (**Exodus 33:20**).

**Read Isaiah 6:1-5*****God is love*****Read John 3:16**

God is not only perfect in holiness; he is also perfect in love. He is moved by compassion for his creation (**Psalms 145:17-18**). He is not some distant God, but is a Person we can get to know (**James 4:8**).

**Read 1 John 4:10,16**

You cannot understand God unless you understand both these aspects of his nature. But God is not just perfect in holiness and perfect in love, he is also perfect in his balance between the two.

**A Balanced Nature****Read Exodus 34:6-7**

It is important to see God's whole nature, not just focus exclusively on one part. God is a God of love, but he is also a God of holiness. He is a God of compassion, but he is also a God of justice.

**Read Jeremiah 9:23-24**

When mankind sinned, God was faced with a problem.\* He loved us, but his holiness demanded that judgment against evil. He could not turn a blind eye to our sin. But there is more to God than we have yet discovered in this lesson. There are in fact three aspects to God's nature which are in perfect balance:

- God is absolutely holy
- God is absolutely loving
- God is absolutely wise

**Read Ephesians 1:7-8****Read Romans 11:33****Read Romans 16:27**

When the holiness of God and the love of God came into conflict over the dilemma of mankind, God's perfect wisdom went to work. God sent Jesus to die in our

\* As human beings, we are often problem-focused. We are very aware of the problems that we ourselves have, but tend to be blinded to the problems that others have. And very few of us realize that God, too, has problems. And what was God's main problem? You and I!

place. Instead of punishing us, as He has the right to, God took on himself the punishment his holiness demanded. The Cross was where the love of God and the holiness of God met.

**Read Romans 5:8**

**Read 1 John 3:1**

## **A Revelation of God**

God has revealed himself in many ways, using many different parables. He describes himself as:

- A Father (**Psalm 103:13; John 20:17; Ephesians 3:14-15; James 1:17**)
- A Spirit (**John 4:24**)
- A Shepherd (**Psalm 23:1-4; 100:3**)
- A Rock (**Psalm 18:2,31; 62:5-7; 92:15**)
- A Savior (**Psalm 25:5; Isaiah 43:11; 1 Timothy 2:3-4; Jude 25**)
- A Warrior (**Exodus 15:3**)
- A Judge (**Hebrews 12:23; James 4:12; 5:9; Jude 1:15**)
- A King (**1 Timothy 1:17; 6:15**)

The beginning point of our walk with God, however, must be a revelation of God as God. Before we can appreciate God's love, we must understand his holiness. Before we can appreciate God's wisdom, we must understand God's intolerance for sin. The Bible calls this most basic understand "the fear of the Lord."

**Read Proverbs 9:10**

The fear of God is called "the beginning of wisdom" and it is also the beginning revelation of God. Without this revelation, our perception of God will be distorted.

**Read 2 Corinthians 7:1**

The fear of God is not a terror of God. It does not cause us to hide from him, but is an awe of God's power and holiness that causes us to see our lives in the right perspective. A biblical fear of God produces a genuine humility that actually draws us closer to God (note **James 4:6-8; 1 Peter 3:8; Colossians 3:10**).

**Read Hebrews 12:28-29**

## **Seeing the Unseen God**

**Read 1 Timothy 1:17**

God is unseen, but He has revealed Himself in three special ways to mankind:

### ***In his creation***

**Romans 1:20** tells us:

"For since the creation of the world God's *invisible qualities* – his eternal power and divine nature – *have been clearly seen*, being understood from

what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”

Creation reveals the most basic attributes and character of God. This is like a rough sketch of the image of God. How many times have you gone for a walk in a park, or looked out over a mountainous landscape, or across the rolling waves of the sea, and in a moment in time captured something of the grandeur and majesty of God. When you discover God personally for yourself, the whole of nature suddenly becomes a window on God’s presence. You see the marks of his handiwork in the fine detail of the leaves, in the extraordinary beauty of the flowers, in the magnificent variety of birds that flit between the trees.

In the same way that you can discern the character of the painter from his paintings, so we can see much of God in what he has created. But within very strict limits. There is enough revealed in creation so that “men are without excuse,” but we cannot rely on creation alone to grasp the fullness of God’s total character. As Arthur W. Pink writes:

“Creation reveals God’s wisdom and power, but it gives us a very imperfect presentation of His mercy and love. Creation is now under a curse. It is imperfect because it has been marred by sin. Therefore, an imperfect creation cannot be a perfect medium for revealing God and hence, also, the testimony of creation is contradictory...Creation displays God’s *natural* attributes but it tells us little or nothing of His *moral* perfections. Nature knows no forgiveness and shows no mercy, and if we had no other source of information we should never discover the fact that God pardons sinners. Man then *needs* a written revelation from God.”<sup>1</sup>

God did not leave us with only a partial revelation of himself in creation. He gave us one of the most precious gifts in human history: a written revelation of himself.

## ***In his Word***

### **Read Romans 16:25-26**

The Bible’s whole purpose is to reveal God – not just his impersonal attributes, but also his heart and character.

### **Read Acts 17:22-34**

Paul had been “greatly distressed to see that the city [of Athens] was full of idols.” The Athenians had no revelation of God, except the most basic realization that there was something beyond their immediate understanding, that there was something “unknown” about God (note **Acts 17:22-23**) and Paul declared:

“Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.”

The Bible is the proclamation of what is “unknown” (through creation) about God. It reveals not only his basic attributes – his power, his presence and his knowledge – but also his character – his holiness, his love and his wisdom. The Bible is supe-

rior to creation as a description of God, just as a full portrait is superior to a rough sketch. But even though the written Word is far superior to creation in its revelation of God's nature, God did not leave it there. He did not just *write* to us about himself. He *demonstrated* his nature in the sending of Jesus.

### ***In his Son***

**Read John 1:17-18**

**Read Colossians 1:15**

In Jesus, we see the nature of God expressed. He is the perfect image of God – not a rough sketch, not even a full portrait, but an exact 3D likeness (**Hebrews 1:3**). In Christ, we see everything that God is – his love, his holiness, his wisdom and his power – all in perfect balance.

**Read 2 Corinthians 4:6**

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur W. Pink, *The Divine Inspiration of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), p.11-12.

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