Experiencing God

Our Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help people begin discovering who God is, what He is like, and His desire for them to know Him personally. Through this discovery, they can begin to recognize why God is worthy of their trust, become open to seeking Him, and consider the eternal life He offers through Jesus Christ.

Truth to Live: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John 17:3 ESV

The Problem

People come to consider God for many different reasons. We may feel that something is missing in our lives, face problems we don't know how to solve, or wonder whether there is more to life than what we have experienced. We may be looking for answers, direction, peace, or a better understanding of God.

Some of us may have heard about God all our lives without really knowing who He is or understanding whether we can know Him personally. Others may be curious about the Creator but unsure what to believe.

Whatever has brought us to consider God, we may have unanswered questions or incomplete ideas about who He is, what He is like, and whether He can be trusted. We need to discover what God has revealed about Himself so we can understand who He truly is, why He is worthy of our trust, and what it means to know Him personally.

Lesson Goal

By the end of this lesson, the learner should understand more about who God is and what He is like, recognize why He is worthy of their trust, and be willing to commit to believing His truth by seeking Him personally and taking the next step toward discovering how to know Him through Jesus Christ.

The lesson follows a simple progression:

- KNOW the Truth — Discover who God is.
- BELIEVE the Truth — Commit to trusting what God has revealed.
- LIVE the Truth — Act on that belief by seeking Him and taking the next step.

Commitment to believe doesn't mean pretending to have no questions or doubts. It means being willing to take God's Word seriously, trust Him, and respond to what He reveals.

Personal Reflection

Before we begin, take a few moments to think about your journey with God. These questions are not a test, and there are no right or wrong answers. They are simply an opportunity to reflect on where you are and what you hope to discover.

1. What brings you to the One Step Disciples program? What would you like to get out of this journey?
2. Do you consider yourself a Christian? What does being a Christian mean to you?
3. How would you describe your relationship with God today?
4. Is there something about God, your faith, or following Jesus that you would like to understand better or see change in your life?

Prayer for the Journey

Before beginning the lesson, pray for God's guidance and help. Ask Him to open the learner's heart and mind to His truth, help you communicate His Word clearly, and give both of you understanding. Thank Him for His Word and for the opportunity to seek Him together. Prayer is not merely an opening activity; continue

praying, listening, and trusting the Holy Spirit to do what only He can do.

Before We Begin

We have taken time to consider what has led us to seek God and what we hope to discover. Each of us may be starting from a different place. We do not need to have every answer. The purpose is to discover what God has revealed, consider what it means, and explore why He is worthy of our trust. Let's begin by considering what draws people to seek Him.

LESSON DISCUSSION

1. Why Do We Seek God?

The Search for Meaning and Purpose

People ask questions about God, the meaning of life, why we are here, and what happens after death. Some have believed in God for years; others are just beginning to wonder whether He exists or whether He can be known. Our search may begin with curiosity, a longing for meaning, a desire for peace, or circumstances that make us reconsider what matters most.

Jesus told a story about a son who left home and eventually came to his senses when his life fell apart (Luke 15:17). Sometimes a difficult season, an unexpected change, or a quiet sense that something is missing causes us to stop and think more deeply about life and God.

Psalm 63:1 (ESV) says, "O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you." Scripture describes a longing that goes deeper than simply wanting answers or a better set of circumstances.

Our desire to seek God is not about earning His love. God has already shown His love for us. Romans 5:8 tells us that Christ died for us while we were still sinners. As we begin to seek Him, we can discover who He is, learn more about His love, and consider His invitation to know Him personally.

Why does this matter to me?

Recognizing a desire to s3eek God can be a beginning, but desire alone does not tell us everything that is true. We can look to God's Word, consider what it reveals, decide whether we are willing to believe Him, and begin taking steps to live in response.

Have you experienced a time when something caused you to stop and reconsider life, your purpose, or what you believe? What questions did it raise for you?

Illustration: Martin — Discovering Something Is Missing

Martin has a good job, a comfortable home, and a family he loves. He tries to treat people fairly, yet sometimes he wonders whether something is missing. His coworkers occasionally talk about faith and knowing God. Martin has heard about God, but he has never really considered what it means to know Him personally.

One evening, he opens a Bible and begins reading for himself. As he reads about Jesus, he begins to see that God is not simply someone people talk about or turn to when life goes wrong. The Bible reveals a God who loves people and wants them to know Him. Martin begins to consider whether that love is real for him, too.

He realizes he does not have to make himself worthy of God's love before seeking Him. God has already demonstrated His love, and Martin wants to understand more. He decides to set aside time each day to read John's Gospel, ask what Jesus reveals about God, and talk honestly with God about his questions and desire to know Him. He does not suddenly have all the answers. He takes a step, no longer content merely to know things about God, but beginning to seek God personally.

2. How Has God Revealed Himself?

We cannot discover everything about God simply by looking at the world or relying on our

own ideas. But God has not left us without a witness. He has made Himself known in several important ways.

Through Creation

Psalm 19:1 (ESV): "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork."

Romans 1:20 explains that God's eternal power and divine nature can be perceived through the things He has made. Creation gives us reason to look beyond what was created and seek the Creator.

Through His Word

2 Timothy 3:16 (ESV): "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness."

The Bible is not merely a collection of human opinions. It is God's Word, given to teach us what is true and to correct and train us. We need to pay attention to what Scripture says rather than accepting only what sounds good or matches what we already believe.

Through Jesus Christ

John 1:18 (ESV): "No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known."

Jesus uniquely reveals God to us. As we learn about Jesus—His words, actions, character, death, and resurrection—we learn what God has made known about Himself. Our next lesson, God's Salvation, will focus more directly on Jesus and how we can respond to Him.

Why does this matter to me?

We can consider what creation reveals, learn from the Bible, and look closely at Jesus rather than relying only on our own ideas or the opinions of others. These are invitations to investigate what God has revealed and consider whether we are willing to believe His Word and take the next step.

When you consider creation, the Bible, and Jesus, what do you currently believe about God? Is there anything you would like to understand better?

3. What Is God Like?

As we seek God, we need more than our assumptions or other people's opinions. We need to consider what He has revealed about Himself. The following characteristics give us a starting point for understanding why He is worthy of our trust.

God Is Good, and His Love for Us Is Real

Truth: God loves us so much that He gave His Son, Jesus Christ, so that those who believe in Him may have eternal life.

John 3:16 (ESV): "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

Psalm 34:8 (KJV): "O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him."

God doesn't simply tell us He loves us; He has demonstrated His love by sending His Son. His love is not something we have to earn. He invites us to discover His goodness, understand what He has done for us, and come to know Him personally.

Why does this matter to me?

Knowing facts about God is not the same as knowing Him personally. As we discover His goodness and love, we can begin to understand why He is worthy of our trust and consider a relationship with Him.

Would you like to know God's goodness and the love He has for you, and develop a personal relationship with Him?

God Is Trustworthy

Truth: God is faithful and true. We can trust what He says and depend on His character because He does not change.

Psalm 9:10 (ESV): "And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek you."

God knows us better than we know ourselves. He sees what we cannot see and understands what we do not. People may disappoint us and circumstances may be uncertain, but God remains faithful to His character and His Word. We may not always understand what He is doing, but we can learn to trust Him because of who He is.

Why does this matter to me?

Truth: Fear, worry, and uncertainty often grow when we do not know what will happen or how things will turn out. Depending on God and His Word rather than relying only on our own understanding can help us face uncertainty with greater peace.

Philippians 4:6–7 (ESV): "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Are you willing to consider trusting God when you do not understand what is happening? Would you like to learn to depend on Him and His Word in your daily decisions?

God Is Sovereign

Truth: God is sovereign over all creation. His wisdom, power, and authority are greater than ours, and nothing is beyond His ability.

Jeremiah 32:17 (ESV): "Ah, Lord GOD! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you."

God created the heavens and the earth. His power is not limited by what we can see or understand, and His wisdom is greater than ours. We may not understand why things happen, and God does not promise that life will unfold exactly as we would choose. But He sees and understands what we cannot, and nothing is beyond His power.

Why does this matter to me?

We often try to control circumstances because uncertainty makes us uncomfortable. Recognizing God's sovereignty reminds us that we are not responsible for controlling everything. We can seek His wisdom, trust His authority, and depend on Him when we do not understand.

How does knowing God has greater wisdom and power than you affect your willingness to trust Him with what you cannot understand or control?

God Works for Our Good

Truth: God is at work in the lives of those who love Him, working through all things for their good according to His purpose.

Romans 8:28 (ESV): "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."

This does not mean that everything that happens is good. It means God can work through all things for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. His purpose is not simply to make life easier; He is also shaping His people to become more like Jesus.

Why does this matter to me?

When difficult circumstances come, we may wonder whether any good can come from them. We can learn to trust that God is able to work toward His good purposes even when we cannot yet see the outcome.

When you face difficult circumstances, how might knowing God can work through them for good change the way you respond?

Illustration: Carrie — Seeking God in the Middle of Hardship

Carrie was seriously injured in a car accident caused by a drunk driver. Her injuries leave her hospitalized and facing a long recovery. Visits from friends and family become less frequent, and she feels lonely and wonders what the future will hold.

She remembers church and Bible stories from childhood and begins to wonder whether God is real and whether she can know Him personally. She starts reading the Bible again and discovers truths about God's character and love. She begins to see that although her circumstances are painful and uncertain, God has not stopped loving her.

Carrie prays honestly about her fears, loneliness, and questions. She also begins looking for a church where she can learn and connect with other believers. Her circumstances do not immediately change, and recovery remains hard. But she begins discovering that her relationship with God need not depend on having an easy life. She is learning to seek Him, trust what she discovers in His Word, and take steps toward knowing Him personally.

What Carrie's story illustrates: Hardship can cause us to reconsider what we believe and begin seeking God. As we discover His character and love, we can take steps toward knowing Him even when we do not understand our circumstances.

God Invites Us to Seek Him Wholeheartedly

We don't seek God to earn His love; we seek Him because He has already shown His love for us and invited us to know Him personally.

Deuteronomy 4:29 (ESV): "But from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul."

God invites us to seek Him earnestly and wholeheartedly. We do not have to be perfect or have every question answered before we begin. We can come honestly, pay attention to what He has revealed, and be willing to respond as we learn.

What Does It Mean to Know God?

Knowing about someone and knowing that person personally are not the same thing. We can know facts about God without yet living in a relationship with Him. Jesus connected eternal life with knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom the Father sent (John 17:3).

Knowing God is more than collecting information or agreeing that certain statements are true. It involves responding to what He has revealed, trusting Him, and beginning to live in relationship with Him. This lesson is a beginning. The next step is to discover what God has done through Jesus Christ and how we can respond to Him.

5. How Do We Seek God?

Isaiah 55:6 (ESV): "Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near."

We can begin seeking God by making time to read His Word, praying honestly about our questions, reflecting on what we learn, and responding to the truth He reveals. We do not need to pretend we understand everything. We can ask for wisdom, keep seeking, and take the next right step.

Remember This Truth

- God has revealed Himself through creation, His Word, and Jesus Christ.
- God is good and His love is real. He is trustworthy and sovereign, and He can work through all things for the good of those who love Him.

- God invites us to seek Him wholeheartedly. We do not have to earn His love before we begin.
- Knowing about God is not the same as knowing Him personally.
- We can begin by seeking God, considering what He has revealed, and taking the next step toward knowing Him through Jesus Christ.

6. Action Step: Begin Seeking God

As you begin this step, remember that you are not trying to earn God's love. You are responding to the love He has already shown you and taking time to discover who He is.

This week, set aside a little time each day to begin seeking God.

1. Read the Scriptures from this lesson again. As you read, ask what each passage reveals about God.
2. Begin reading one chapter of the Gospel of John each day. Notice what Jesus says and does, and ask what He reveals about God.
3. Talk honestly with God about your questions, doubts, hopes, and desire to know Him. You do not need perfect words.
4. Keep seeking. You do not have to understand everything at once. Pay attention to what you learn and consider how you might respond.

This is not a test or a demand for instant change. It is a first step toward discovering who God is and how to know Him through Jesus Christ. Our next lesson is God's Salvation.

Additional Scriptures for Further Study

Jeremiah 9:23–24 (ESV) — Knowing God's Character

"Thus says the LORD: 'Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.'"

Jeremiah 29:13 (ESV) — Seeking God Wholeheartedly

"You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart."

Romans 5:8 (ESV) — God's Love Before Our Response

"But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

James 4:8 (ESV) — Drawing Near to God

"Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded."

Brother Mike

One Step Disciples