

Discussion topic #1: Who is the God of your understanding?

Points covered.

- 1) Image**
- 2) Relationship**
- 3) Trust / Faith**

Questions to facilitate small group discussion.

- A) What is His name?**
 - B) Do you know Him? How and through what sources do you gain knowledge of Him?**
 - C) Is this a god of your creation, and if so, how have you come to know this god?**
 - D) Are you in a personal relationship with Him? What does “personal relationship” mean to you?**
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Discussion topic #2: Communicating with God

Points covered.

- 1) I know God is guiding me.**
- 2) I know God answers my prayers.**
- 3) I need people – fellowship – to hear God**
- 4) Tough, hard honesty**
- 5) How to deal, when I’m impatient with God’s timing – “Buy time, son.”**

Questions to facilitate small group discussion.

- A) How do you talk to God?**
 - B) How do you listen to God?**
 - C) What does prayer look like for you?**
 - D) Do you meditate? Why? And how do you meditate?**
 - E) In what types of ways do you believe God is communicating with you?**
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Discussion topic #3: Letting go of self-will

Points covered.

- 1) The fear of letting go – so what IS He going to ask me to do?**
- 2) Sometimes I’m not the center of the universe.**
- 3) The goal (challenge?): being God-centered, 24 hours of the day**
- 4) Who knows better what I am suited for, than the God who made me?**
- 5) Yes – God WILL give me more than I can bear – but it’s okay, if I have Him.**

Questions to facilitate small group discussion.

- A) Are you in control of your life?
- B) What are you willing to let go of?
- C) What are you holding on to?
- D) How does self-will personally affect your relationship with God?

Discussion topic #4: How is God working in your life?

Points covered.

- 1) Shepherds and fishermen.
- 2) God takes the former life and redeems it to use for His purpose.
- 3) God's purpose and plan extends farther back into the past, and onward into the future, then we can see.

Questions to facilitate small group discussion.

- A) Do you believe that God is guiding you?
- B) If you pray, will God answer your prayer?
- C) On your own – are you able to recognize how God is working in your life?
- D) Do you need others to help you see how God is working in your life?
- E) Are you patient with the “sometimes slow” work of God?

Discussion topic #5: A Worldview and Philosophy on Faith and Ethics

Points covered.

- 1) What is a Worldview
- 2) Worldview and Faith
 - a. Foundation
 - b. Framework
 - 1. **Ontology**—who are we? Are we individuals or are we totally a product of our environment?
 - **Determinism**: the environment and its processes determine the actions and reactions of every organism found therein.
 - **Free Will**: Organisms have some measure of free will, sentience, and individuality, even if they are to some degree determined by their environment and/or Creator.

2. Epistemology—how do we know what is truth, if there even is truth? If we believe that truth is relative—that people can basically decide what works best for them as they go—then we are doing the following things to our worldview:

- We are *de facto* saying that our foundation is that of random chance. Only in a world ruled by random chance would there be no basis for absolute truth.
- Moreover, we have no basis for ethics or personal understanding of life. Everything we feel or believe is subject to our own emotional whims and experiences and the emotional whims and experiences of others.
- Nothing we perceive can be trusted. To be sure, Scripture tells us that we are not to rely on our own understanding, but a belief that truth is relative basically undermines our understanding altogether.

3. Axiology—how do we arrive at values? Is there such a thing as absolute good and evil?

- **Absolute values:** good, evil, justice, love, etc. which are immutable and which transcend cultural and social boundaries.
- **Socially constructed values:** people in various cultural groups determine what is good and bad for their group

3) God and Ethics:

a. Absolute Truth

- God provides the basis for personal meaning and experience
- God made us in his own image and called us to an eternal plan. While it will be marked with struggles and trials, this eternal plan now means everything we do—including our business decisions—has eternal significance

b. Absolute Values

- By not allowing his creation to die and suffer eternal damnation, God fulfilled both his love and his justice by taking on flesh and dying for us all.
- Christ fulfilled both God's sense of justice and of love.
- Jesus was fully man, and so as a man he died and experienced God's rejection of him; therefore, God's justice was fulfilled.
- But since Christ was and is fully God, he never sinned and so his sacrifice was sufficient for us all (remember that even if we wanted to, none of us could die for

mankind because we are guilty of our own sins). So, we see in Christ a wonderful fulfillment of love and justice fully embodied.

No other religious perspective describes a God who would pursue man—who would come to us and deign to interact with us, much less save us. In every other religious perspective, the god or gods must be appeased through sacrifice and obedience. But since we have been saved by grace—to wit, since we can do *nothing* to earn God's favor, save humbly acknowledge our need for him, we are unable to be selfish in our obedience to God, even if we wanted to!

Our triune God, had perfect fellowship among himself before man was ever created. He did not *need* to create us for his own self-satisfaction; rather his selfless love was the basis for our existence, that love further culminated in his deigning to take on flesh and dwell among us in this dreary and dusty world. Moreover, to worship God is not to debase ourselves by kissing the hand of God; rather it is about getting past our myopic ways of thinking, getting out of the squalor of our own agendas, in order to experience true and intimate fellowship with absolute goodness, absolute love, and absolute beauty. A God who loves selflessly would want nothing less for his creation, which is why he wants us to worship him for eternity. If he is perfectly good, then he cannot be a prideful God. He is love, power, and humility all in one, and he is all of these things personified. What would we not give to experience this?

Questions to facilitate small group discussion.

- A) Prior to sobriety what was your worldview/foundation/framework?**
- B) What parts of your framework still need shoring up?**
- C) What parts of your old worldview are you still keeping separate from God?**
- D) How has God and your sobriety changed you and your values?**