**Series 3 - Getting to Really Know God...**

Hi, friends, and welcome to this lesson! People wonder and speculate about God but often neglect to go directly to Him and let Him introduce Himself! God reveals Himself through two great methods. The first is His written revelation, the Bible. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16). The Bible is the book *by* God and *about* God!

The second method is the evidence of creation, because it was *"God* who created *all things*through Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 3:9, emphasis added throughout). Not only is every creature evidence and proof of a genius Creator, every creature gives us insight into the mind and power of the Creator. That's what Paul meant when he said, "For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse" (Romans 1:19-20, English Standard Version).

In this lesson, we focus on many of the wonderful things we learn about God by reading His written Word, the Bible, which is God's masterpiece of self-revelation. Hopefully it will whet your appetite to read the entire Bible so that you can learn much, much more about God.

Then as you get into the habit of studying the Bible and praying every day and putting God's Word into practice in your everyday life, you will be forming a deep, personal relationship with God. You will be going beyond getting to know *about* God. You will be getting to really *know God* as your Father and Friend.

**Lesson 1: How Does God Identify Himself in the Bible?**

*This lesson focuses on key scriptures in the Bible where God reveals highly significant things about His nature and actions.*

First, consider the story of the righteous man Job in the biblical book of Job. This story relates the spiritual transformation of Job from a man who knew a great deal *about* God to a man who really came to *know* God in a personal and intimate way.

This book is highly thought-provoking. For most of the book, Job and his friends are stating what they think they know about God, but their limited views fall far short of understanding the great mind, purposes and plan of God. After God talks with Job, Job has a major breakthrough in understanding.

Job said, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6). Job came to see God in a deeper way with the eyes of faith and spiritual understanding. Job was ashamed of his cockiness, thinking he understood more than he really did, and he deeply repented. When he said, "I abhor myself," he meant that he despised his self-justification and implications that God had been unjust.

Job apparently came to realize more deeply that everyone's life includes suffering and that suffering is a necessary part of spiritual growth. Job surrendered to God's will, having come to understand that God is the sovereign Lord of the universe, He has perfect understanding, and He always does what is best for us in the long run. We must trust Him.

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**Has Anyone Ever Seen God?**

Almighty God is Spirit and, in His usual glorified state, is invisible to the human eye (Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:27). That partly explains why John said, "No one has seen God at any time" (John 1:18).

But how should we interpret that since the Old Testament gives many accounts of God *appearing* to people?

Notice that the second half of John 1:18 shows that John was talking about *God the Father,* not God the Son, Jesus Christ. Also Jesus said, "Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God [referring to Himself, Jesus]; He has seen the Father" (John 6:46).

These verses point to the fact that the God who appeared to people during Old Testament times was the One who later became Jesus Christ!

Prior to Jesus' incarnation (birth) as a human being, John refers to Him as "the Word" and as "God": "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Later John wrote, "And the Word became flesh [when He was born of Mary] and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (verse 14).

In [Lesson 2](http://www.freebiblestudyguides.org/bible-teachings/God-revealed-old-testament-was-the-one-who-became-Jesus-Christ.htm) we will thoroughly prove that the God who appeared to people in the Old Testament was the Word who became Jesus Christ, not God the Father. In this lesson, we merely want to establish that fact to prevent any confusion.

However, when we discuss the nature or character of God, we make no distinction between God the Father and God the Son because They are identical in nature and character. When Jesus was praying for His disciples and His future disciples to be "one" (united and unified), He prayed, "that they may be *one as We are"* and "that they may be one*just as We are one"* (John 17:11, 22).

So although we don't literally see God with our eyes (and won't until Christ's return to earth), we can *perceive* and better understand His nature, character, purposes and goals. That is the purpose of this lesson.

**What single word best defines God's character?**

1 John 4:8
He who does not love does not know God, for *God is love.*

Matthew 22:37-39
Jesus said to him, "‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Love defines God's nature, and love is what He most wants to see in the character of His children. Therefore, it's no surprise that His greatest commandments are to *love*—to love God and to love people.

**What are other words that define God's character and nature?**

Psalm 11:7
For the Lord is *righteous*, He loves *righteousness*; His countenance beholds the upright.

1 Peter 1:15-16
But as He who called you is *holy*, you also be *holy* in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be *holy,* for I am *holy*."

Psalm 119:172
My tongue shall speak of Your word, for all Your commandments are *righteousness.*

God is righteous and holy. Even during Jesus' earthly life, He never sinned. God defines the absolute standards of righteous character, and He sets the perfect example. God's commandments and laws spell out God's righteousness, and by obeying those laws we are imitating Christ and becoming like Him. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5).

**What is one of God's roles that we need desperately?**

1 John 4:14
And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as *Savior* of the world.

1 Timothy 2:3-4
For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God *our Savior,*who desires all men to be*saved* and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

When you read the Bible, notice how often you see the words *savior, save, saved* and *salvation*. Notice also synonymous words like *deliver, delivered* and *deliverer*. When God began to announce the Ten Commandments, He introduced Himself as, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Exodus 20:2; Deuteronomy 5:6). The miraculous liberation of the Israelites from Egypt illustrates God's plan to miraculously deliver us out of our slavery to sin. And every Sabbath day is a reminder of God's role as Savior (Deuteronomy 5:15).

The angel that appeared to Joseph told him that Mary's child should be called Jesus (meaning *Savior*) "for He will *save* His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

The word *salvation* is used to refer to the various steps that God takes to save us, but our ultimate salvation will be our resurrection from mortality to glorious immortality (1 Corinthians 15:50-54).

**What's another of God's important roles?**

Genesis 1:1
In the beginning God *created* the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1:27
So God *created* man in His own image; in the image of God He *created* him; male and female He created them.

Psalm 104:30
You send forth Your Spirit, they are *created*; and You *renew* the face of the earth."

Exodus 20:11
For in six days the Lord *made* the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

Notice that every Sabbath day is a reminder that we are created beings and a reminder of who our Creator is! That has many implications, including the fact that God is the Owner and the supreme Ruler over His creation, and God is dedicated to providing the best possible care of His creation. We can also learn many things about God by observing His creation, as we are told in Roman 1:18-23.

Consider that God also created all the laws, including the laws of science and mathematics and the spiritual laws.

*When* did creation take place? There is often confusion over this question. God's original creation of the universe and planet earth was evidently many millions of years ago. But eventually the earth suffered a cataclysm and all life was destroyed. In Genesis 1:2, the Hebrew word translated "was" is translated in other places as "became." As a result of the cataclysm, this verse apparently should read, "The earth *became* without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep."

Then the rest of Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 are describing God's *re-creation* of the world about 6,000 years ago. As Psalm 104:30 words it, God did *"renew* the face of the earth." These two phases of God's creation will be thoroughly explained and proved in Lesson 3 of this series on "Getting to Really Know God."

**Is God the supreme example of grace, mercy and generosity?**

Psalm 145:8
The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy.

Philippians 4:19
And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 2:8
For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.

Psalm 103:2-4
Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies.

Our gracious God not only provides all our needs, but also bestows on us the gift of grace. The apostle Paul often used the Greek word that we translate *grace* to refer to all the spiritual gifts that God offers humanity, including the forgiveness of sin and the offer of eternal life. God's grace is truly amazing and awesome—it is gracious generosity greater than our minds can comprehend!

The Old Testament writers often used the Hebrew word *hesed* (or *chesed*) when referring to a primary characteristic of God. There is no single English word that adequately translates the profound meaning of this word. It is often translated as "merciful kindness"or"lovingkindness" (which is how it is translated in Psalm 103:4).

**Is our merciful God also a God of justice?**

Psalm 33:5
He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 10:17-18
For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing.

We live in an unjust world, and often life isn't fair. That makes it all the more wonderful that we can rely on a God who is completely just and fair. A central question is this: Since everyone sins and the penalty of sin is death, how can God save us and still be a God of perfect justice? It is because Jesus Christ took our place and suffered the death penalty for each of us. Jesus died to fulfill God's justice and thereby made it possible for God to offer mercy toward all humanity.

**Is God omnipotent (all-powerful)?**

Psalm 91:1-2
He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of *the Almighty*. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him I will trust."

Ephesians 1:19-20
And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.

The word *Almighty* literally means "all-powerful." One of God's names is *El Shaddai,* which is translated "God Almighty." All of Psalm 91 is inspiring, for it describes the complete confidence we have if we are trusting in God. After all, God can easily protect us no matter how great the dangers are. God also has supreme spiritual power to defeat Satan the devil, to transform the worst of sinners, and to resurrect mortal humans to become immortal glorified saints in the coming Kingdom of God.

**Is God omniscient (all-knowing and all-wise)?**

Psalm 139:1-4
O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O Lord, You know it altogether.

Psalm 33:13-15
The Lord looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. From the place of His dwelling He looks on all the inhabitants of the earth; He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works.

Luke 12:6-7
"Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows."

Jesus frequently shocked both His friends and His enemies by telling them what they were thinking. God not only knows everything that is taking place in all the seemingly endless universe, He has control over everything that is happening. How comforting to know we have a Creator and Provider who will never forget us or overlook our needs and prayers!

**Is God omnipresent (ubiquitous, present everywhere at once)?**

Psalm 139:7-10
Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell [in the grave, or in the ground], behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me.

Psalm 23:4
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

2 Chronicles 16:9
"For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him."

God can be everywhere at once because He sends His Spirit everywhere. So the help and understanding that God sends by His Spirit are just as effective and perfect as if God were standing right beside us.

God's Holy Spirit also serves as His eyes and ears to bring back to God perfect and total awareness of everything in every place. Hence, God's Spirit provides two-way communication.

**Last but not least, does God claim all authority and lordship?**

Psalm 47:2, 8
For the Lord Most High is awesome; He is a great King over all the earth... God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy throne.

Exodus 20:3
"You shall have no other gods before Me."

Deuteronomy 13:4
"You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him."

God is the sovereign power over all the universe. Everything was created by Him. He expects complete loyalty, reverence and obedience. We must not allow anything in our lives to rival God. Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 spell out many blessings for obedience and many curses (punishments) for disobedience. Our obedience shows our love for God (1 John 5:3). And obedience is a major key to getting God's answers to our prayers (1 John 3:22).

**Apply Now**

What are other qualities and characteristics of God? Write down as many as you can think of. Think about what God is like, what He has done, what He is doing now and what He promises to do. While you're at it, try to think of God's many names and titles because they are descriptive of God's various virtues and roles. (After you have thought of as many as you can, you can find more about God's names at these links: "[God's Many Names Reveal Much About Him](http://www.ucg.org/booklets/TC/godsmanynames.asp)" and "[What is the correct name for God?](http://www.ucg.org/bible-faq/sacred-name-god.htm)")

Also take time to reflect on all that you have written down. And in your prayers in the days ahead, spend time thanking God for all that He is and for all that He does!

**Next Lesson:** [The God Revealed in the Old Testament Was the One Who Became Jesus Christ!](http://www.freebiblestudyguides.org/bible-teachings/God-revealed-old-testament-was-the-one-who-became-Jesus-Christ.htm)

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