

# LESSON ONE: GOD

## BIG IDEA:

Who is \_\_\_\_\_? How can I have a \_\_\_\_\_ with Him? God loves us so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to save us from our sins and set us free. The cost was high, and it was one that only God Himself could pay.

Then, He sent His Holy Spirit to empower and guide us in this life. God is our Father, and He wants His children to know Him, not just through a set of rules to follow but through a genuine, vibrant relationship. God gives us life. He gives us His Son. He gives us Himself. It is the joy of our lives to know, pursue, love, and live in a relationship with God.

## DISCUSSION:

When you think about God, what comes to mind? How has your opinion of God changed over time?

What do you expect out of your relationship with God?

Share about a time that you felt disconnected from God or that He was unreachable. How did you realize that God is always right there with you? What advice would you offer to someone who feels disconnected from God?

*Take some time to reflect on these questions in your journal!*

## TEACHING:

Our beliefs about and view of God determine how we approach him and interact with our identity, culture, and mission. Very little about you is more important than what you believe about God.

Many views of God are distorted. We all have conceptions of God. We all have experiences with God or people who say they know God. Gratefully, God gives us an accurate introduction to Himself in the Bible.

In this lesson, we want to:

1. Dispel three \_\_\_\_\_ views of God based on the Bible.
2. Teach God as \_\_\_\_\_ persons (known as the Trinity).
3. Teach three things God wants you to know as you approach Him.

## Three Wrong Views of God

Our view of God profoundly influences our relationship with Him, shaping the way we approach and interact with Him.

---

Some individuals perceive God as an authoritative figure, just and righteous, but stern and even easily angry. In this viewpoint, God's love appears conditional, contingent on one's deeds and actions. Those who hold this perspective tend to grapple with a burden of guilt and shame, fearing that their imperfections distance them from God's favor.

---

Others envision God as distant, disinterested, and uninvolved in the affairs of humanity. This perspective leads to questioning the very existence of God, as the perceived lack of connection leaves them longing for a tangible experience of His presence and love. Such individuals may struggle to find joy and ease in their faith journey.

---

For some, God appears as exacting and hard-to-please. Every action is scrutinized, and His love is seemingly earned through righteousness. Consequently, we grapple with self-imposed pressure to conform to a standard of "rightness," often leading to an air of self-righteousness and, eventually, hypocrisy.

*It's crucial to recognize that these perspectives can distort our understanding of God's true nature. As we progress into a deeper discipleship journey, we should aim to correct these misperceptions, instead embracing a more biblical understanding of God—one that reflects His love, presence, and kindness. By shedding these flawed views, we open ourselves to a relationship with a God who loves us unconditionally in every aspect of our lives.*

## The Biblical View of God

*God is a Father (we are his sons and daughters)*

Central to our understanding of God is the truth that He is a loving Father, and we are His deeply loved and enjoyed sons and daughters. Many of us struggle to understand, let alone experience, God in this light. Past experiences, particularly those marked by strained relationships with our earthly fathers, have left us with deep-seated wounds that continue to influence how we view God. When our encounters with our earthly fathers have been marked by brokenness, distance, or hurt, it can be challenging to receive the idea of a heavenly Father who loves unconditionally and provides us with safety and security. We can be left feeling hesitant to embrace Him for who He says He truly is.

---

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Recognizing these wounds is the first step toward healing and transformation. Our journey of discipleship involves allowing God's truth to redeem the barriers created by our past experiences. Begin now, asking God to help you grasp the depth of His love that transcends the limitations and failure of our human relationships.

## Reframing Our \_\_\_\_\_

As we allow God to redefine our understanding of fatherhood, we embark on a journey of renewal and redemption. Gradually, our perspective shifts from one of skepticism or fear to an acceptance of God's desired role in our lives. Through this transformation, we can experience the freedom to approach God with openness and vulnerability, confident in His unchanging love for us.

and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor 6:18)

Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. (Matt 6:9)

## God is Three in One (\_\_\_\_\_)

God's true self can be seen in what theologians call the Trinity. This means that there is one God, and he exists as three persons at the same time: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They exist in perfect unity and community with one another.

### Rather than try to explain the Trinity, let us show it to you:

And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." (Matt 3:16-17)

Here we see all three persons of the Trinity

- The \_\_\_\_\_ speaking from heaven
- The \_\_\_\_\_ (Jesus) being baptized and coming out of the water
- The \_\_\_\_\_ "descending like a dove" on the Son with the love of the Father

Here we see a clear picture of God

- The \_\_\_\_\_ who loves
- The \_\_\_\_\_ who comes to save
- The \_\_\_\_\_ who is present

## Putting it Together: Three Things God Wants You to Know as You Approach Him

The journey of approaching God is grounded in three profound truths that He wants you to understand and experience in your relationship with Him.

### You are My Child (\_\_\_\_\_)

Recognize that as a child of God, His regard for you mirrors the unconditional and eternal love He has for Jesus (John 1:12). Just as He fully accepts Jesus, He extends this same acceptance to you. Beyond being a distant deity, God desires to be your Father, embracing you with the Spirit of adoption (Romans 8:15-16).

This concept carries enormous significance. The burden of feeling rejected by God weighs on us, but embracing God's acceptance frees us from the never-ending quest for approval from others. God's acceptance of us is rooted in our identity as His children. This means that, even in our moments of failing and sinning, God wants us to seek refuge in Him. He intends to be your primary place of safety in every circumstance, always dependable and faithful (Hebrews 13:5).

### I Love You (\_\_\_\_\_)

God's love for you mirrors the love He showers upon Jesus, and incredibly, we hold a cherished place in His heart. Don't miss that! God feels about you the same way He feels about Jesus. He proclaims you as a child of God (1 John 3:1). You're His favorite! Despite any doubts you may have or self-perceived unworthiness, God's love is unwavering, unconditional, and eternal. Your actions hold no influence over His love; it remains constant. Understand that God's love predates your salvation, is present when you sin, and will not be changed by your future failures. He demonstrated this by sending His Son while you were still a sinner (Romans 5:8). On this side of eternity, sin is a part of our existence, but it is not a part of affecting your relationship with your Father in Heaven.

Contemplating the truth that God's love preceded your actions and is unchanging prompts a realization: no external factor can sway His affection for you (Romans 8:38). In times of doubt, this truth stands as an unshakeable anchor, reminding you of the everlasting and steadfast love that God pours upon you.

## I am Proud of You (\_\_\_\_\_)

This idea might feel strange – how can God be proud of us? Remember, God's view of you doesn't come from what you have done. It comes from who He is. Beyond your accomplishments, God knows His design for you. Through the Holy Spirit, He empowers and nurtures your growth, aligning you with His intended plans and purposes (Ephesians 2:8-10).

Remember, God's nature transcends authoritarianism, distance, and criticism. He is your loving Father, your Savior in Jesus, and the abiding presence of His Holy Spirit. When we understand this, we can approach God through relationship, not rules. Relationship changes everything. Embracing these truths and taking God at His word is meant to reshape our approach to God, shifting from rule-bound interactions to enjoyment and freedom.

Ask God to help you receive the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, so you can be free to experience closeness with God (2 Corinthians 13:14).

*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (2 Cor 13:14)*

Pray and ask God to reveal Himself to you as He says He is so you can relate to Him as he desires.

## COMMON QUESTIONS

### How can God be three persons at one time?

God is Father, Son, and Spirit. This is one of the great mysteries of the faith. We know it's true because the Bible repeatedly makes it clear, but we don't understand how it works. One of the greatest proofs of the reality of God is that there's much about Him we can't understand. Isaiah 55:8 tells us that "His thoughts are not our thoughts, and His ways are not our ways." That said, several things in creation can illustrate the Trinity and help us understand, even if imperfectly:

- \_\_\_\_\_ : past, present, future
- \_\_\_\_\_ : height, width, depth
- \_\_\_\_\_ : body, soul, spirit
- \_\_\_\_\_ : solid, liquid, gas

### I don't have a good relationship with my father, so how am I supposed to trust God as a father?

Sometimes, our experience with our biological fathers doesn't match up well with the standard God sets, which can be really difficult. God models the role of "father" as it should be, not the other way around. God is the father who loves fully and unconditionally. He will never leave, and He will always forgive. He builds up, equips, frees, and empowers. God sets the standard for fatherhood. The critical thing to remember is that God was the first Father, and He always fills that role perfectly.

### Why does God love us so much?

He chooses to - He freely loves us. More than a feeling, love is a choice. The Word tells us in 1 John 4:8 that God is love, so He embodies that choice in action. It's even more beautiful when we understand that God isn't forced to love us because of a feeling. He chooses to love us freely, unconditionally, and always.

## How can I trust God if I don't fully understand Him?

There are lots of things in life that we trust but don't completely understand. To trust God is to have faith in God. Faith is defined as "trust or confidence in something or someone." When you sit in a chair, you show faith that the chair will hold you. You don't know if the chair will stay together until you sit. We trust God based on His history, character, and promises. Over time, as you grow closer to God, trusting Him will become more natural.

## NEXT STEPS

*Ask yourself: Am I currently serving God out of duty or love?*

Spend time in the presence of the Father this week and develop a personal time of connection with Him. Don't worry about being formal. Just be honest, read your Bible, talk to God in prayer, and watch how your time with God transforms.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

- Knowing God (Packer)
- Delighting in the Trinity (Reeves)
- Our Triune God (Ryken)
- The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything (Sanders)

## MEMORY VERSE

*For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, (Romans 8:15-16)*

## DAILY SCRIPTURE AND JOURNALING

### Monday

But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom 5:8)

Journal: What makes God's love so different from the world's love? What evidence can you show of God's love through you?

### Tuesday

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God (Eph 2:8-10)

Journal: What qualifies you to receive God's gift of salvation? What can be true about you if God's grace is free?

### Wednesday

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12)

Journal: What does it mean to receive him? What does it look like practically when we believe in his name?

### Thursday

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. (1 John 3:1)

Journal: What is the evidence of God's love for us? What does being a child of God mean for you?

### Friday

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom 8:38-39)

Journal: Does it ever feel like God has stopped loving you? Based on this scripture, what would it take for God to stop loving you?

## PRAYER FOCUS

In addition to praying for one another, pray through Jeremiah 29:13:

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

Ask God to reveal His character and prepare you to seek Him with their heart. Pray for one another to renew their commitment to Jesus each day.