

SESSION ONE God

foothold

Q | who is God?

God is personal, eternal Spirit, Creator of the universe, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father:

“Lord, through all the generations you have been our home! Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth and the world, from beginning to end, you are God.”—Psalm 90:1-2 (NLT)

climbing higher

- **God Is Spirit...**“God is spirit” means God is unseen by the natural eye. In a sense God is like the wind. You cannot see the wind. You can see what the wind does—how it tosses the branches of the trees, makes your kite soar in the sky, or bends the grass as it moves across the field. You know the wind is there because of what it does. In a similar way you can know that God is near by the things he does—for God is always acting on our behalf.
- **God Is Everywhere...**The Church uses the word omnipresent to refer to the fact that God, while unseen, is present everywhere. By this word

the Church simply means that God is always near us and that there is no place we can be where God is not.

- **God Is Almighty...**Omnipotent is the word the Church sometimes uses to express that God is all-powerful. By all-powerful we mean that God can do anything God wants to do. And since God is good and loving as well as almighty, we can be assured that God controls the world so that his purpose will be achieved in the end. Whenever Christians become disturbed about the power of evil in the world, they ought to look to God and shout, "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigns."
- **God Is All-Knowing...**Omniscient is a big word with a simple meaning, God is all-knowing. God knows everything about us, everything good, everything bad and everything in between. And the wonderful thing about it is that God still cares for us and wants to help us.
- **God Is Holy...**There are two things the word holy means when we use it related to God. It reminds us first of God's unspeakable greatness, majesty, and elevation above all created beings. Have you ever been in church and felt yourself very small and humble in God's presence? Isaiah had such an experience when he came into the Temple and saw a vision of the Lord (Isaiah 6:1-8). It is God's holiness which awakens this feeling of awe and reverence.

The word holiness also leads us to think of the righteousness of God—of his opposition to all evil, hatred of all sin and love for his creation. Have you noticed how closely this is related to the first meaning of holiness? It was when Isaiah felt himself in the presence of the high and majestic Lord that he knew how sinful he was and how great, powerful and all-loving God was.
- **God Is Love...**Christians have no doubt that God loves them (John 3:16). Why does God love you? It is not because you are attractive or because you are good, although God rejoices in your goodness. God's love toward you doesn't depend on any of these things, but only on the fact that God can't help loving because that's who God is. "But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

Adapted from According to Thy Word

your daily journal

DAY ONE: From the creation narrative

Read: Genesis 1:1-10

Key Verse: Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

What do you learn about God from Genesis 1:1-10?

What do you hear God saying to you in Genesis 1:1-10?

DAY TWO: Moses and the burning bush

Read: Exodus 3:1-15

Key Verse: Exodus 3:6

Then he said, "I am the God of your father; the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

What do you learn about God from Exodus 3:1-15?

What do you hear God saying to you in Exodus 3:1-15?

DAY THREE: Walk in light of your presence

Read: Psalm 89:11-17

Key Verse: Psalm 89:14

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne;
love and faithfulness go before you.

What do you learn about God from Psalm 89:11-17?

What do you hear God saying to you in Psalm 89:11-17?

DAY FOUR: Shout for joy

Read: Psalm 100:1-5

Key Verse: Psalm 100:4

Know that the LORD is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

What do you learn about God from Psalm 100:1-5 ?

What do you hear God saying to you in Psalm 100:1-5 ?

DAY FIVE: The Father revealed in the Son

Read: Matthew 11:25-30

Key Verse: Matthew 11:27

All things have been committed to me by my Father: No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

What do you learn about God from Matthew 11:25-30?

What do you hear God saying to you in Matthew 11:25-30?

DAY SIX: Being one

Read: John 17:20-26

Key Verse: John 17:24

Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

What do you learn about God from John 17:20-26?

What do you hear God saying to you in John 17:20-26?

DAY SEVEN: Children of God

Read: Romans 8:12-17

Key Verse: Romans 8:14,15

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

What do you learn about God from Romans 8:12-16?

What do you hear God saying to you in Romans 8:12-16?

FOLLOW-UP: How do you respond to these readings about God?

Head—New insights:

Heart—What I believe:

Hands—Implications for my life:

SESSION TWO The Bible

foothold

Q | what do we believe about the Bible?

We believe that the Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the word of God and the only perfect rule for faith, doctrine, and conduct.

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.” —2 Timothy 3:16-17, NLT

climbing higher

The Bible is the account of God’s making himself known to human beings and their response to God. It can be called “the book of the acts of God.” The Bible tells the story of an ancient people—the Hebrews—who were called by God to signal God’s saving mission to all people. It also tells the story of a new people of God—the Christians—who have heard God’s call to decision through Jesus Christ, and have been set apart to demonstrate God’s redemption to the whole human race. Through the Bible the Holy Spirit draws us to God, helps us come to faith and guides our actions.

Let's look at this in more depth.

The Old Testament tells a story—a story of God's covenant or agreement with a particular people named the Hebrews. Through historic events God acted.

- God acted by entering into a covenant with Abraham.
- God acted through Moses by leading the Hebrews out of Egypt, the land of oppression.
- God acted in the conquest of the Promised Land, Canaan.
- God acted through judges and kings, prophets and leaders to help the Hebrews understand their mission in the world.
- God acted in judgment on the Hebrews, allowing them to be exiled in Babylon.
- God acted in allowing the people to return to their home country again.

This means that God is not just an idea; nor is God some being just sitting in the heavens. God has acted in history. How else would we know him?

The New Testament tells a story, too—the story of God's new covenant or agreement with a particular people named Christians, those who had heard his call in the person of his own son, Jesus Christ. Through historic events God acted again.

- God acted in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- God acted in the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- God acted in creating a new people of God, the Church.
- In each of these acts we see God calling his people into being, shaping their lives in keeping with his will.
- God and a called-out people: this is the theme of the Old Testament.
- God-in-Christ and a called-out people: this is the theme of the New Testament.

If we can keep our eye on this central message of the Bible, we will not lose our way in a great forest of details—names, places, far-away events, and words. This is sometimes called “salvation history.” It is the story of God at work in the world of human beings.

Adapted from The Story of the People of God

your daily journal

DAY ONE: The Ten Commandments

Read: Exodus 20:1-21

Key Verses: Exodus 20:1-3

And God spoke all these words: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me."

What do you learn about the Bible from this reading?

What do you hear God saying to you in this reading?

DAY TWO: Meditate on his law day and night

Read: Psalm 1:1-6

Key Verses: Psalm 1:1, 2

Blessed are those

who do not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,
but who delight in the law of the LORD
and meditate on his law day and night.

What do you learn about the Bible from this reading?

What do you hear God saying to you in this reading?

DAY THREE: Teach me your decrees

Read: Psalm 119:9-18

Key Verses: Psalm 119:11, 12

I have hidden your word in my heart
that I might not sin against you.

Praise be to you, LORD;
teach me your decrees.

What do you learn about the Bible from this reading?

What do you hear God saying to you in this reading?

Day Four: The word became flesh

Read: John 1:1-14

Key Verse: John 1:14

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only [Son], who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

What do you learn about the Bible from this reading?

What do you hear God saying to you in this reading?

DAY FIVE: God-breathed

Read: 2 Timothy 3:14-17

Key Verses: 2 Timothy 3:14, 15

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how

from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

What do you learn about the Bible from this reading?

What do you hear God saying to you in this reading?

DAY SIX: Do what the Word says

Read: James 1:19-27

Key Verse: James 1:22

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

What do you learn about the Bible from this reading?

What do you hear God saying to you in this reading?

DAY SEVEN: Revelation from Jesus Christ

Read: Revelation 1:1-8

Key Verse: Revelation 1:3

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

What do you learn about the Bible from this reading?

What do you hear God saying to you in this reading?

FOLLOW-UP: How do you respond to these readings?

Head—New Insights:

Heart—What I believe:

Hand—Implications for my life:

SESSION THREE

God and the World

foothold

Q | what is God's relationship to the world?

God created the world by his Word, sustains it by his power, and entrusts it to the care of human beings.

"You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created everything and it is for your pleasure that they exist and were created." – Revelation 4:11, NLT

climbing higher

Let us look at the account of creation in Genesis. What are the important things it says about God and the world?

It teaches that God is the maker of all things. This is to deny that the world came by chance or by accident. Creation is not the result of blind forces working within nature itself. It is the handiwork of God.

Creation is the free act of God. God's act would not be free if there were someone or something which forced Him to create a world. The truth is that God made the world because it pleased Him to do so. God wanted the world.

God's reason for making the world is love. We could say, of course, that

there are several reasons for the creation of the world. For one thing, the creation shows God's power. It also speaks of His glory. The deepest reason, however, is the fact that He is love. He created the world that there might be living beings with whom He could share His love.

Everything God created was good. It is true that later on people chose to do evil rather than good and sin entered the world. In the beginning, however, "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good" (Genesis 1:31 TNIV).

Some religions teach that the creation itself is evil. Christianity says this is God's world and we are not to flee from it but work in it to correct the evils which our sins have brought to it. The Bible says in one place that "the whole world is under control of the evil one" (1 John 5:19 TNIV). Notice it does not say the world is evil but that it is under control of the evil one. Actually it is God's world, and Christians must try to rescue it from the attempt of the evil one to gain control. We may be sure that in the end God will be Lord of all.

Humans are the crown of creation. You notice in reading the first chapter of Genesis that God's work of creation was in stages. First God made the simpler things and then the more complex. There is an order among created things. Humans are to "rule over the fish in the sea and over the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground" (Genesis 1:28 TNIV). People are made to steward the creation and use it according to the wisdom given them. We must remember that people are also under God and are to be obedient to God's will at all times.

What about Science?

Is there a conflict between what the Bible says, as in the creation accounts, and science? Certainly the Bible conflicts with any scientific explanation which says there is no God.

It is important to remember that it is not the purpose of Genesis to speak in scientific language. After all, science is continually changing. Science at the time Galileo (1642) was very different from the science of Thomas Edison's day (1931). It is certain that the science of today will seem old-fashioned in just a few years. Very wisely the Bible doesn't try to give a scientific picture of creation but presents a simple account, the meaning of which can be grasped by all people, whether they lived one thousand years ago or live today or will live a thousand years from now. In Genesis we see that the world is created by God and is dependent upon God. This is the most

important teaching of the first two chapters in Genesis.

It is the conviction of a great many Christians that there can be no real conflict between science and the Scriptures if each is rightly understood.

Adapted from According to the Word

your daily journal

DAY ONE: Creation Continues

Read: Genesis 1:11-2:3

Key Verses: Genesis 1:31-2:1

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

What do you learn about God's relationship to the world from this reading?

What do you hear God saying to you in this reading?

DAY TWO: Wickedness in the world

Read: Genesis 6:1-8

Key Verses: Genesis 6:7-8

So the LORD said, "I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that

move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them.” But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

What do you learn about God’s relationship to the world from this reading?

What do you hear God saying to you in this reading?

DAY THREE: Moses challenges the people before turning over leadership to Joshua

Read: Deuteronomy 30:11-20

Key Verses: Deuteronomy 30:15, 16

See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.

What do you learn about God’s relationship to the world from this reading?

What do you hear God saying to you in this reading?

DAY FOUR: What are human beings?

Read: Psalm 8:1-6

Key Verses: Psalm 8:5, 6

You have made them a little lower than the heavenly beings
and crowned them with glory and honor.

You made them rulers over the works of your hands;
you put everything under their feet.

What do you learn about God's relationship to the world from this reading?

What do you hear God saying to you in this reading?

DAY FIVE: Whom shall I fear?

Read: Psalm 27:1-4

Key Verse: Psalm 27:4

One thing I ask from the LORD,
this only do I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the LORD
and to seek him in his temple.

What do you learn about God's relationship to the world from this reading?

What do you hear God saying to you in this reading?

DAY SIX: God loved the world

Read: John 3:16-21

Key Verses: John 3:16, 17

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

What do you learn about God's relationship to the world from this reading?

What do you hear God saying to you in this reading?

DAY SEVEN: Chosen to bear fruit

Read: John 15:9-17

Key Verses: John 15:16, 17

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other.

What do you learn about God's relationship to the world from this reading?

What do you hear God saying to you in this reading?

FOLLOW-UP: How do you respond to these readings?

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