

GOD

Part 1

LIFE-CHANGE OBJECTIVE

- To gain a deeper sense of God's love for you as a Father.
- To act in some new way on the fact that God is your Father.

What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.

- A.W. TOZER

If you can understand it, it's not God

- AUGUSTINE

As we look at God's existence, we need to remember three key truths:

1. God is real
2. God is revealed
3. God is relational

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GOD IS REAL

God is not a character in a story, in some fairy tale. He is as real as we are.

HOW DO WE KNOW GOD EXISTS?

1. We see God's _____ in what he has made
(Genesis 1:1, Romans 1:19-20; Acts 14:16-17)

PSALM 19:1–2

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.

2. We see God's _____ on human history.

ACTS 17:26–27

“From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.”

3. We see God's _____ in our lives.

Look at the story of Elijah and his battle with the false prophets on Mount Carmel in **1 Kings 18:24-39**.

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God Reveals Himself

ROMANS 1:20 (NLT)

From the time the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

2. God reveals himself to us through _____.

2 PETER 1:20–21 (NLT)

Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.

3. God reveals himself to us through _____.

JOHN 1:18 (NASB)

No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

Jesus came to give us understanding (1 John 5:20). Jesus chose to reveal the Father to us (Matthew 11:27). God has revealed

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himself in many ways, but his last word and clearest revelation is in Jesus (Hebrews 1:1-2).

Gallup surveys consistently show 90 percent of Americans believe that God is real. For most people, whether God exists is not the issue. The real issue is, what kind of God is he? What does Jesus real to us about God?

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GOD IS RELATIONAL

Let's look at some popular ideas about what kind of God lives in Heaven and see what the Bible has to say about the real God.

THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD

The popular idea: God is distant.

The truth: God is _____(Psalm 139:7-12; James 4:8).

The popular idea: God watches our actions from afar.

The truth: God is intimately involved in _____
of our lives (Matthew 6:25-30; Luke 12:6-7).

The popular idea: God is anxiously waiting to judge those who do wrong.

The truth: God is waiting to _____all who ask (John 3:17)

The popular idea: God is either powerless against or doesn't care about much of the evil in the world.

The truth: God allows an evil world to continue to exist so that more people might be saved out of it (2 Peter 3:8-9).

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A FRESH WORD

Four theological words provide the background for the statements we've covered about the real person of God;

1. God's immanence: God is awesomely near to all of us. God is not beyond the farthest star; he is as near as our next heartbeat. He does not just watch us; he is with us.
2. God's omnipresence: God is everywhere (omni = all + present). His presence fills the universe. He is everywhere all at once.
3. God's omniscience: God knows everything (omni = all + scient = knowing). He knows everything that has happened, is happening, and will happen. He knows what I will think before I think it.
4. God's omnipotent: God is all mighty (omni = all + potent). He has the power to do anything – *anything* – he wants. Immediately!

To sum it up: In a world in which people see God as _____, the truth is that God is _____.

THE NUMBER ONE WAY THAT WE SEE GOD IS RELATIONAL:

Jesus taught us to call God our _____.

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God relates to us as a perfect Father.

1. Our Father is willing to make _____. He sent his Son into the world to die as our Savior (John 3:16; 1 John 4:14).
2. Our Father has _____ and love for his children (Psalm 103:13; 2 Corinthians 1:3).
3. Our Father _____ his children (Proverbs 3:12)
4. Our Father knows our needs before we ask (Matthew 6:8; Matthew 7:9-11); that's why we pray "Our Father" (Matthew 6:9).
5. Our Father _____ us (Matthew 6:20; Hebrews 11:6).
6. Our Father makes us his heirs (Romans 8:15-17).
7. Our Father _____ us (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17).
8. Our Father shows no _____ among his children.
 - He gives access to all equally (Ephesians 2:18).
 - He blesses all richly (Romans 10:12).
 - He judges each person impartially (1 Peter 1:17).

Jesus told us: *"Anyone who has seen ____ has seen the Father"* (John 14:9).

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KEY PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

You may be having a hard time thinking of God as a Father because of the poor father you had growing up. One of the most refreshing breakthroughs in your life will happen when you begin to see God as the Father you never had, to see God as the Father who fulfills what your father never was.

Start strengthening this new perspective in your life by praying the following prayer. (Pray those parts that are appropriate for your life and add to the prayer where you need to.)

God, I now accept you as the Father I never had. I was disappointed by my father, but you will never disappoint me. I never knew my earthly father, but you want to know me. I was hurt by my earthly father, but I am healed by you. I was ignored by my earthly father, but I have your full and constant attention. I could never meet the expectations of my earthly father, but I can find freedom from expectations in your grace. Amen.

Maybe you had an earthly father who, although he was not perfect, gave you the kind of love that put you on the road to finding relationship with God through Jesus. You need to pray,

Thank you, God, for my earthly father. I know he wasn't perfect in the way he raised me, but he was good, and he was kind, and he was a man of character. He made decisions in his life that helped me to see a little bit of what you are like, decisions that made it easier for me to get to know you. Thank you for the gift he gave me. Amen.

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ACTING ON THE TRUTH

Truth can seem cold and distant until we see how it fits into our lives. How does the truth of God's reality fit you in a personal way? Worship!

1. Before the next session, read the following passages of Scripture, in which God speaks about his reality. As you read, focus on listening to God. Hear him speaking directly and personally to you.

ISAIAH 43:10

"You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me."

DEUTERONOMY 32:39

"See now that I myself am he! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal."

I ISAIAH 44:6,8

"This is what the Lord says— Israel's King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God... Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one."

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2. Concentrate on God's power and control as you remember some of the significant things he has done.

You don't have to be a history major to see God's work in human history. Think about the fact that all of history is divided by the life of Christ. Consider how history has shown us that the most powerful of human governments rise and fall. Get out a piece of paper and use it to finish the sentence, "God, I see your control over human history when I look at..."

Now finish the sentence, "God, I see your control over my life when I look at..."

3. Consider God's beauty and creativity as you close your eyes and think about something he has made. Better yet, get out there and see it!
4. Jesus taught us to call God "Abba." The word **Abba** is the intimate name for a father that little child would use, like our word **Daddy**. (Don't think of it as irreverent; it's a word that expresses your intimate connection with and your ultimate dependence on God.)
5. It helps some people to picture being in the presence of God. We don't worship the picture; it simply helps us to worship God. Picture God as your Father. Picture him walking up to you, taking your face tenderly in his hands, and asking you, "What do you want me to do for you today?"

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When you think of God, do you have a picture in your mind? What is that picture?
2. What is the one thing that for you makes it seem as if God is in the room with you? What makes God seem the most real to you? Seeing what he has made? Being in church? Reading the Bible? Looking at human history?
3. Look at the list of popular ideas about God and the truths about God. In this list, which popular idea do you think is potentially the most damaging? Which truth is the most difficult for you to accept (perhaps because of the teaching of the culture you were brought up in)?
4. Is there any part of this study that wasn't made as clear to you as you would like? What question was not answered, or what issue was not addressed during our study?
5. What is it about God's love that most helps you to see him as a perfect Father? How has God shown his love as a Father to you? For ideas, review the list we covered of eight ways God meets our needs by relating to us as a Father.