

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living Study Guide

UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

LESSON 2: WHO IS GOD? WHAT IS HE LIKE?

INTRODUCTION

This Study Guide is part of a Discipleship Essentials module titled *Understanding Salvation*. This series of lessons examines the very foundational idea of salvation, and what occurs in the life of a person who becomes a Christian. These lessons are critical for every believer to understand before they can effectively share the Gospel with others. Each lesson examines a concept from a Biblical perspective, and includes time for discussing these principles as well as how to effectively apply them to your life. This set of lessons is ideal to use when discipling new believers to ensure they fully understand these concepts.

The Study Guide is intended for an individual to look deeper into a specific lesson on their own. The lessons can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials, such as the video and audio productions found on www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

This lesson looks at how God has revealed His nature and His identity through the Word of God. It is amazing beyond words that God has chosen to reveal Himself and wants us to intimately know who He is. We do not have to guess about what God desires, what pleases Him or His purposes – the Bible explains all these things! Let's explore who God is together.

JUST SO YOU KNOW...

How can we possibly know God? God is so big, mysterious, and powerful! Those things are true, and it can be difficult for us to understand who God is. Can we really know God? Many religions and worldviews suggest that God is unknowable, or too big to comprehend. But the Bible tells us that we can know God! God has revealed Himself through His Son Jesus Christ, and through His Word, the Bible. We must go to the Bible first to see who God is, rather than looking to tradition, philosophy or our own reasoning so that we can have all the facts. The Bible is God's letter to us, show us who He is, what He is like and what He desires. The Bible is not just a collection of words written by human hands. It was divinely inspired, preserved and remains the truth. Explore what God wants us to know about Him by reading your Bible today!

GETTING STARTED

1. What do most people you know believe about God? Where did they get their understanding of who God is and what He is like?

2. How has your perception of God – or whether there is a God – changed over the years? What caused this change?



STUDY

❖ **WHO IS GOD?** People believe many things about who God is. Your ideas about God define what religion or faith you belong to. For instance:

- **Atheists** believe they can know for certain that there is no God
- **Agnostics** believe one cannot know for sure if there is or is not a God
- **Polytheists** believe that there are many Gods
- **Pantheists** believe there is a god, but everything in nature is part of God
- **Theists** believe there is a God, but have different ideas about what He is like

Our beliefs about God determine who or what we worship. Worship means giving due respect and honour to. We worship what is most important to us in life. Many people who refuse to believe in any god have made themselves a god in their own eyes. With so many positions in the world about God it is easy to become confused. However, God has revealed Himself to us in His Word, the Bible.

➤ The Bible is very clear that there is only one true God, and He is unique. Read the following verses. What do they reveal about the nature of God?

Deuteronomy 6:4	
Exodus 7:1	
Isaiah 46:9	
Psalms 82:6	
1 Corinthians 8:5-6	

❖ **GOD IS THREE IN ONE:** One of the most difficult things to understand about God is His three-in-one nature. The Bible tells us that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit and yet there is only one God. Although some have mistaken this to mean that there are three separate gods, the Bible is clear that there is one God. The writers of the Bible talk about God in three different ways.



- Read the following verses and identify whether the verse mentions God the Father, God the Son or God the Holy Spirit. Some verses may mention more than one.

1 Thessalonians 1:1	
2 Peter 1:17	
1 John 5:20	
Titus 2:13	
Romans 9:5	
Hebrews 1:8	
Acts 5:3-4	
2 Corinthians 3:17	

It is important to note that the concept of the “Trinity” (or God who has always been three expressions of one God) is Biblical. It is seen in the pages of scripture; however the word “Trinity” is not used in the Bible.

❖ **WHAT GOD IS LIKE?**

THE LIVING GOD: Many different theistic religions – that is, those who believe there is one God – have different views on what God is like. Christianity is unique in its beliefs about God. These beliefs set Christians apart from other worldviews. A true picture of God has been given to us in the Bible.

- Read the following verses: 1 Timothy 4:10, Hebrews 9:14, Psalm 84:2, Deuteronomy 5:24-25 and answer: What does it mean that God is a Living God?

God is Living, which means He does not sit back and watch the events on earth unfold. He is active in them. He responds to our prayers and our actions. He is moving in this world and actively carrying out His plans.



THE PERFECT GOD: God has revealed Himself as holy, blameless and unequalled in power. In a word, God is perfect. Look up the following verses and write down how they describe His perfection.

Matthew 19:26	
Malachi 3:6	
Psalms 139:7-12	
Psalms 18:30	
Romans 1:18-23	

The verses above demonstrate that God knows everything, is all powerful, is unchanging and eternal, is righteous and without sin. Isn't God amazing? What is even more incredible is that God desires to have a relationship with us, and to let us know Him.

❖ **THE RELATABLE GOD:** Other religions teach that God is unknowable. This is very different than Christianity! We believe the Bible when it states that God desires that we know Him, know His desires, and communicate our desires to Him. God calls us friends, children, even His bride! These are all pictures of intimate relationships.

➤ What do the following verses say about God's desire to have a relationship with us?

Hebrews 11:6	
Psalms 145:18	
John 3:16	
John 15:15	
2 Timothy 3:16	
1 John 4:16	
1 John 5:20	

❖ **GOD'S PLAN:** God loves us so much that He chose to reveal Himself to us, and His plan of salvation was designed to rescue us from our sinful lives and bring us back to Him. He revealed Himself in the Bible so that we would know that He is one, is living, is holy and perfect, and that He desires a relationship with us! God wants us to know who He is, just as He knows everything about us. We, being full of sin, are the objects of God's wrath. But God is full of love for sinners, and in Christ's death God's justice was satisfied. We can be forgiven for our sins, and can know God because of Jesus.



IN SUMMARY

- ❖ There are many different views in the world about who God is, and whether we can know anything about Him. (Different views include atheist, agnostic, pantheistic, polytheistic and theistic.)
- ❖ God reveals His nature to us in the Bible, which is complete, free of errors and given to us by God.
- ❖ God is One God, but has three natures. These are God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.
- ❖ God is perfect. God knows all things, is all-powerful, unchanging and eternal, and free of sin.
- ❖ God is relatable. God is a person with desires, a will, and emotions. God wants us to know Him, and has made a way for us to have a relationship with Him.
- ❖ God reveals Himself to us through Jesus Christ who is the image of the invisible God; through creation by which we know God's power and divinity; and through the Word of God by which God invites us into a relationship with Him.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1.

How would you explain who God is and what He is like to someone who had never heard about Him?

2.

How is the Christian view of God (as outlined in this lesson) different from that of other worldviews or religions?