

Lesson 1

Introduction - God Is

In the last century, a man named A.W. Tozer made this profound statement. “What comes to our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” Someone else made the somewhat sarcastic remark that “God created man in His own image, and ever since, man has been trying to return the favor.”

What is it that comes to your mind when you think about God? In the following pages and short chapters, we’re going to examine what is commonly called “The Attributes of God.” In other words, who is God? What is He like? How does He differ from those whom He created? What makes Him unique? What is true about His character?

The Bible, God’s Word, tells us what God is like and what He is not like. Without the authority of the Bible, any attempt to explain God’s attributes would be no better than an opinion, which by itself is often incorrect, especially in understanding God. For example, some think of God as being like Santa Claus. Others picture God as a cold and distant judge or a police officer with an attitude. And then some think of Him as a sweet and benevolent grandpa.

In our study, we will cover just thirteen of these attributes or “characteristics” of God. Are there more than this? Some have said the attributes of God are countless. They say this because God is incomprehensible. So anything we try to understand about God will be in a very limited fashion. We are seeing merely the tip of the iceberg. God is infinite. There is no end to God and whatever we say after this doesn’t begin to do justice to the essence of God’s person.

To know God, and all that God has revealed about Himself, is the highest pursuit of life. Proverbs 9:10 says; *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”*

A person never starts being wise until they know God, and a person never gains any understanding until they have the knowledge of the holy. So even though our understanding is finite and limited, hopefully, when finished, we will come to understand a bit more about Him and be motivated to love and to serve Him with the totality of our lives.

Discuss Together

* What are some misconceptions that you might have had about God in the past, or have heard others say about him?

* Read these verses and talk about what you learn from them about God's character.

- o Isaiah 55:6-11;
- o James 1:16,17;
- o Psalm 84:11,12

* Share prayer requests with each other. Pray that you will know the true God.

Lesson 2 . God is Self- Existent and Self- Sufficient.

Have you ever been around a child who asks the question, “Daddy (Mommy), who made God? It’s a good question but one that’s not easy to explain to a child. The answer of course is that God did not need to be made because He has always been.

God does not depend on any source for His existence and exists independently of any cause. God is fully capable of existing in isolation should He so choose. His self-existence is seen in the Name by which He revealed Himself -- Yahweh, the One Who is the “I am that I am.” Exodus 3:14

But this name, “I am that I am” is more than just a name. It is a descriptive name, pointing to all that God is in Himself. In particular, it shows Him to be the One who is entirely self-existent, self-sufficient and eternal.

The psalmist speaks to God's self-existence declaring, “Before the mountains were born, or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.” (Psalm 90:2)

An unborn child is dependent on its mother for life; animals are dependent on their surroundings for life; trees and plants are dependent on sun and rain for life; every living thing is dependent on someone or something else but God is independent and existent in Himself. He is not answerable to us or to anybody.

A.W.Tozer says this about the confusing, head-spinning attribute of God’s self-existence;

‘To admit that there is One who lies beyond us, who exists outside of all our categories, who will not be dismissed with a name, who will not appear before the bar of our reason, nor submit to our curious inquiries: this requires a great deal of humility, more than most of us possess, so we save face by thinking God down to our level, or at least down to where we can manage Him.’

May we be people who strive for such humility to accept God for who He is. Because His self-existence will always be a mystery that cannot be understood by finite man, it *is* a truth that should renew our mind giving us comfort, assurance and stability. He is our self-existent, sure, steadfast, stable Rock.

And similarly, God’s self-sufficiency reminds us that He is totally independent of everyone and everything. Certain people may be called self-sufficient, but finite humans are always totally dependent on God for absolutely everything including their next breath

Discuss Together

- * How would you answer a child or a friend who asked you “who made God?”

- * Read the following scriptures together that explain further this great truth about God.
 - o Acts 17:23-25

 - o Job 12:10

 - o Psalm 102:25-27

 - o Isaiah 40:28-31

 - o John 5:26

 - o Revelation 4:10

- * Share prayer requests and ask God to help you accept this great truth about His self-existence.

Lesson 3

God is the Creator

One of many passages in the Bible that state God is Creator is found in Isaiah 40:28. “Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.”

In the very first verse in the Bible, it says “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” That means that before God did this, there was no heaven and no earth. God simply spoke them into existence. God created the universe with His voice. Everything from light itself, to planets and stars, to the mountains and the seas, to plants and animals—God spoke them into existence

But when God created man, He did something a bit different. He fashioned him out of the earth. “The LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.” Genesis 2:7 Then to complete this miraculous and wonderful work of “creation,” woman was fashioned by God from the man’s rib. This makes mankind unique among creation, because he was created in the image of God.

Aren’t you glad, God is not limited by our understanding? As our Creator, God is the originator and designer of all things. Psalm 104:24 says, “How many are your works, LORD. In wisdom you made them all.”

One author wrote;

“A creator is one who makes something new. People can ‘create’ art projects, musical compositions, and physical structures; however, they always have something to work with. They begin with preexisting matter and form it in new ways. Even music and other intellectual creations have rhythms, rhymes, notes, instruments, and artistic mediums that provide structure and offer possibilities. What is commonly called “creativity” is more akin to synthesis. God had no such raw materials to work with. When we say that God is the Creator, we mean that He is truly creative, in a category all by Himself, because He started with nothing.”

So, when we say that God is the Creator, what we really mean is that no one created Him and that God alone is THE Creator. You and I cannot truly create, because we have to begin with something that has already been created. And because God created everything, it’s reasonable to say, everything is His, including you and me. He has the right to rule over us.

Discuss Together

* Psalm 19:1-4 says, “The heavens declare the glory of God.”

* Share one of your favorite parts of creation.

* Talk about how that part of creation declares the glory of God.

* Read the following verses and discuss how each reveals God as our creator.

o Genesis 1:27

o Genesis 2:18-23

o Jeremiah 10:16

o Psalm 50:12

o Psalm 139

o Revelation 10:6

* Share prayer requests and thank God for creating the universe and you.

Lesson 4

God is Sovereign

God's Sovereignty is a truth that touches all of life. It is a truth meant to be digested so it becomes a part of our very being. We begin with the word itself. The word "sovereign" is both a noun and verb. As a verb it means "to rule," and as a noun it means "king" or "master" or "absolute ruler." To say that God is sovereign means God is in charge of the entire universe all the time.

Writing in his classic work "The Sovereignty of God"; A.W. Pink said;

"The sovereignty of God may be defined as the exercise of His supremacy... Being infinitely elevated above the highest creature, He is the Most High, Lord of "heaven and earth.

Subject to none, influenced by none, absolutely independent; God does as He pleases, only as He pleases, always as He pleases. None can thwart Him, none can hinder Him. So His own Word expressly declares: "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure" (Isaiah 46:10); "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand" (Daniel 4:35).

The sovereignty of God is a very humbling doctrine. Sovereignty reminds us that God is God and we are not. It's like a person who visits my house and starts to criticize things. He doesn't like the picture I have hanging over my television. He doesn't like the color I painted my living room. He doesn't like the way I've decorated my den. Once he is finished with his criticism, only one comment is appropriate. "Mister, whose name is on the title deed to this house? When you start paying the bills around here, you get a vote on the decorating. Until then, feel free to say nothing." That's what sovereignty does. It puts us in the place where we feel free to say nothing about the way God runs the universe.

This is also a mysterious doctrine because it brings us face to face with the problem of evil and free will. If God is sovereign, why is there evil in the universe? If man has free will, how can God be sovereign? Christians have debated these questions for centuries. Suffice it to say that God is sovereign and you are truly responsible for all the choices you make. Often we won't understand how they work together, but they do.

Of course, there's much more we could say, but for now, the sovereignty of God teaches us that there is no such thing as luck, chance, fate or coincidence. You can have God or chance, but you can't have both.

To illustrate; when a cowboy applied for health insurance, the agent routinely asked if he had had any accidents during the previous year. The cowboy replied, "No. But I was bitten by a rattlesnake, and a horse kicked me in the ribs. That laid me up for a while." The agent said, "Weren't those accidents?" "No," replied the cowboy, "They did it on purpose." The cowboy realized that there are no such things as "accidents." How about you? Do you believe that some things catch God by surprise? In the words of wise man from the past; "God is too sovereign to be lucky."

Some passages of scripture that further talk about this amazing attribute of God are found in 1 Samuel 2:2,3; 1 Samuel 2:6-8; Psalm 50:1; Proverbs 15:3; Isaiah 40:15; Isaiah 43:13; Isaiah 46:9,10; Isaiah 14:24; Daniel 4:35; Acts 2:23; 1 Timothy 6:15

Discuss Together

- * Talk about this attribute of God. Share times when you have struggled with the problems of evil in the world.

- * How does our confidence in his sovereignty help us face difficult circumstances?

- * Read the following scriptures that build our confidence in our sovereign God.
 - o Job 42:2

 - o Psalm 103:19

 - o Psalm 115:3

 - o Psalm 135:6

 - o Daniel 4:31,32

 - o Ephesians 1:11

- * Share prayer requests and pray that God will help you to believe that He is sovereign.

Lesson 5

God is All Powerful

When we say that God is all powerful, what we are saying is that God's power is infinite and unlimited. He can do with power anything that power can do. Said another way, God has the power to do all He wills to do. He has both the resources and the ability to work His will in every circumstance in the universe.

If you prefer a more simple definition, just think of these words; "God is able." He is able to do everything He needs to do or wants to do. Nothing is too hard for God. "Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you." Jeremiah 32:17

No one can stop God's plans. "I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted." Job 42:2

He made all things and all things serve him. "your laws endure to this day, for all things serve you." Psalm 119:91

God does whatever He pleases. "Our God is in heaven; He does whatever pleases him." Psalm 115:3

These verses tell us that God is all powerful and thus has unlimited authority and influence. He has the ability to do whatever His will dictates. An example of this is that God dictated His will when he spoke the universe and the earth into existence. And now He continues demonstrating his power by sustaining the universe and earth He created.

To sum it up, we may say there are no limits to what God can do because there are no limits to God. "It is no harder for God to make a galaxy than to lift a robin's egg off a nest."

A.W. Tozer said; "God's power is effortless, because effort means I am expending energy. God expends no energy." Or as Genesis 18:14 asks; "Is anything too hard for the LORD?"

Therefore, our God being powerful is an attribute of wonderful comfort to the believer. The all-powerful God is with me. He exercises His power on my behalf. Whenever I need Him, and even when I think I don't, He is there. He never fails. All His plans for me will come to pass. I can trust Him completely.

Some verses that further verify this attribute can be found in; Nehemiah 9:6; Job 37:23; Psalm 33:6; Isaiah 44:24; Isaiah 46:10,11; Jeremiah 32:27; Romans 4:17

Discuss Together

* Share a time when you have witnessed the power of God in your life.

* Read these verses and discuss the great power that our God has.

- o Job 11:7-11
- o Psalm 147:5
- o Isaiah 46:10,11
- o Hebrews 1:3
- o Jude 24,25
- o John 10:17,18

* Share prayer requests and pray that God will open your eyes to His power over your life that accomplishes His will.

Lesson 6

God is All Knowing

A great English preacher from the 19th century, Charles Spurgeon, had this to say about God being “all knowing.”

“God knows our likes and dislikes, our desires and our designs, our imaginations and our tendencies. He knows not only what we do, but what we would do if we could. He knows which way we should go if the restraints of society and the fear of consequences were removed; and that, perhaps, is a more important proof of character than the actions of which we are guilty. God knows what you think of, what you wish for, and what you are pleased with: he knows, not only the surface-tint of your character, but the secret heart and core of it. The Lord knows you altogether. Think of that. Does it give you any joy, this morning, to think that the Lord thus reads all the secrets of your bosom? Whether you rejoice therein or not, so it is and ever will be.”

This attribute of God being all knowing means that God knows all things, past, present and future, real and potential, and He knows them all at the same time. He not only knows what was, and what is, He also knows what will be. More than that, He knows everything that could be, but is not. We can confidently say that very few doctrines are so thoroughly taught in the scriptures as the fact that God knows everything.

God’s knowledge is independent, ours is dependent. No one has ever taught God anything because His knowledge is complete from the beginning. God never “learns” anything. Our knowledge is dependent in that we must learn what we know. God’s knowledge is infinite, our knowledge is limited. He knows everything that could be known, we know a tiny fragment of what could be known.

Also, God knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows what is in each of our hearts. That is why David prayed in Psalm 139, *“Search me, O God, and know my heart.”* God knows things about us that we don’t even know about ourselves. Psalm 19:12 says; *“Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.”* Psalm 90:8 declares, *“You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.”* Everything is transparent to God. Nothing is hidden, everything is clearly seen.

“The Lord searches every heart and understands every motive behind our thoughts.” 1 Chronicles 29:9 “The eyes of the Lord are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good.”
Proverbs 15:3

And from Isaiah 40:13,14; *“Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, or as His counselor has informed Him? With whom did He consult and who gave Him understanding? And who taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge and informed Him of the way of understanding?”*

What a profound effect and difference this should have on the way we live our lives. The next time you are tempted or in trouble, remember God is watching and listening.

Discuss Together

- * Have you ever thought “If they knew everything about me, they probably wouldn’t love/like me?”

- * It’s a powerful thing to be fully known and to be fully accepted. How can this truth about God cause us to fall more in love with Him?

- * Read these scriptures about God’s complete knowledge.
 - o 1 John 3:20;

 - o Hebrews 4:13;

 - o Matthew 6:4;

 - o Matthew 12:36;

 - o Luke 12:3

- * Share prayer request and ask God to help you never to hide anything from Him (as if you could!).

Lesson 7

God is Omnipresent

This attribute that God is omnipresent is the hardest for us to grasp. We can only be one place at one time, but God is everywhere at the same time. Our problem is that we have nothing to compare to it.

Is God all powerful? Yes, and we can slightly grasp that concept because we have power and strength. Is God all wise? Yes, and we can conceive of that on some level because we have wisdom and knowledge.

But there is no sense in which we are can be present everywhere! We can't even be two places at once. For that reason God being omnipresent is mysterious to us.

Some years ago a certain brand of soap advertised itself as "99 and 44/100th pure." But God knows no such sliding scale with regard to Himself. A 99% God is no God at all! If your God is not present everywhere in the universe, then He is not the God of the Bible.

God is not limited by time or space - Perhaps the greatest statement of God being omnipresent is found in the inspiring words of Psalm 139:7-12

“Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,” even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.”

As David contemplates how God knows him inside and out, he wonders where he might go to hide from Him. Heaven, hell, east, west, the far side of the ocean—it doesn't matter for the Lord is already there. But, what about the darkness of the night? Well, the darkness will not deter God either for "darkness is as light to you."

To the Christian, God being omnipresent means that He is there in the midst of our suffering, pain, sickness, sorrow, anger, grief, bitterness, divorce, betrayal, cancer, abortion, warfare, famine, earthquakes, fires, floods, every natural disaster, accidents, personal loss, and at the moment of death.

That means God is always available to us wherever we go, 24 hours a day. We always have His full attention, we don't have to make an appointment, He's never too busy to hear us when we pray, He's never preoccupied with other problems.

One writer said that “God's presence is like the air we breathe. Air is odorless, tasteless, and invisible (when it's not polluted). Most of the time we don't even think about the air we breathe, and yet we depend on it for our very existence. Even so God's presence is everywhere with us, and if it were withdrawn, none of us could survive for even one moment.”

Discuss Together

* Have you ever had the feeling that God was absent or that He abandoned you?

* How can this truth from the scripture help you during times of such feelings?

* Read the following scriptures together about this great truth.

- o Matthew 28:20b;
- o Hebrews 13:5b;
- o Deuteronomy 4:39; 31:6;
- o Psalm 34:8
- o Isaiah 66:1
- o Jeremiah 23:23,24

* Share prayer requests and pray for God's presence to be more evident in every season and moment of your life.

Lesson 8

God is Immutable

Immutability means that God is not subject to change through time or circumstances. He never varies. In His nature and character, God is absolutely without change. In God's essence, attributes, consciousness and will, He is unchangeable.

One author has said; "God cannot change for the better, for He is perfect; and being perfect, He cannot change for the worse."

If God cannot change, then it must follow that He cannot increase. He cannot decrease. He cannot self-evolve. He cannot develop. God's essence is unchangeable. He is immutable.

When we think of an immutable God, we not only think of a person who cannot change in His essential being, but we must also think of a person who cannot change in his attributes. And so when we think of God, and when we worship God and when we praise God, we do not praise Him because He is a little better today than He was yesterday. He is the same in His being and He's the same in His attributes.

That means God never grows in knowledge or wisdom. He never improves upon His own perfection. He never "grows" or "develops" in any respect. He is always wise, He is always sovereign and always just. He is always good and always holy and always merciful and always gracious. Whatever God is, He always is. There are no "sometimes" attributes of God. All of His attributes are "always" attributes. He always is what He is.

God being immutable also means He is immutable in his plans and purposes. He does not have to sit and think now what shall I do? Shall I do this or shall I do that? Because God is infinite in His wisdom, then there is no error in the conception of His plans. All of His plans are perfect, and He does not have to reason them out. He has within Himself the power to know that which is the finest plan and He always carries out that plan perfectly.

Psalm 102:25-27 states; *"In the beginning you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment, like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. But you remain the same, and your years will never end."*

In summation, God's immutability should be a comfort to those of us who are followers of the Lord Jesus Christ because it means God is faithful, always, to His promises and the principles of His Word.

Discuss Together

- * Share some changes that have happened in your life that have been difficult or unsettling.

- * How does this attribute of God help you face such changes in the future?

- * Look up these verses to help better understand this amazing attribute of God.
 - o Numbers 23:19

 - o 1 Samuel 15:29

 - o Isaiah 14:24

 - o Psalm 33:11

 - o Malachi 3:6,7

 - o Hebrews 13:8

 - o James 1:16-18

- * Share prayer requests and pray about how God's unchangeable character can bring you much comfort during the uncertain times in your life.

Lesson 9

God is Righteousness

Righteousness is the character or quality of being right or just. God is totally righteous because He is totally as He should be. His righteousness causes Him to always think and do what is right. He always acts in perfect goodness in relation to His creation. As an attribute of God, His righteousness is united with His attributes of holiness and of wrath, each of them being essential to His character. . *“God is a righteous judge, a God who expresses his wrath every day.”* Psalm 7:11

The book of Romans emphasizes the righteousness of God and shows that God is righteous in His dealings with both sinners and believers. The righteousness of God is the starting point and the theme of the gospel message.

In the early 1500s, Martin Luther sat in the tower of the Black Cloister, Wittenberg, reading Romans 1:17 that says; *“For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last...”* Luther said, “That expression ‘righteousness of God’ was like a thunderbolt in my heart.”

Later, he said, “I hated Paul with all my heart when I read that the righteousness of God is *revealed in the gospel.*” At that moment, Luther saw God’s righteousness as an unobtainable obstacle to eternal life for he was deeply aware of his own sinfulness, and he knew because of it, he was unacceptable to a righteous God. Therefore, as he read this verse he was seized with despair.

The key for Luther was to understand what Paul meant when he wrote, “revealed in the gospel.” The gospel reveals the perfect righteousness of Christ. The gospel reveals that this righteousness of Christ is transferred to the account of the believing sinner. The inner is not *made* righteous, he is *declared* righteous. And when he understood this, Luther was able to grasp the true meaning of the gospel and that discovery ignited and set ablaze the Protestant Reformation.

In summary, we can say the righteousness of God is evident in the way He consistently acts in accord with His own character. God always acts righteously; His every action is consistent with His character. God is always consistently “Godly.” God is not defined by the term “righteous,” as much as the term “righteous” is defined by God. God is not measured by the standard of righteousness; God sets the *standard* of righteousness.

We will see more of God’s righteousness when we get to the lesson on the attribute of God being holy.

Discuss Together

- * In your own words, try to articulate what it means for God to be “righteous.”

- * How does the gospel of Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection reveal the “righteousness” of God?

- * Read these scriptures for more understanding about Gods’ righteousness.
 - o Genesis 6:5,6
 - o Jeremiah 44:4
 - o Isaiah 59:1-3
 - o Habakkuk 1:13
 - o Zechariah 8:16,17
 - o Matthew 25:41-46

- * Share prayer requests and be sure to thank God for His righteousness that is transferred to everyone who puts faith in the gospel.

Lesson 10

God is Just

God's justice is the natural expression of His holiness. If He is infinitely pure, then He must be opposed to all sin and that opposition to sin will one day be demonstrated in His treatment of sinful and unbelieving humanity.

When we read that God is a God of justice, we are being assured that His actions toward us are in perfect agreement with His holy nature. God always acts in a way that is consistent with the requirements of His character.

While the most common Old Testament word for "just" means "straight," and the New Testament word means "equal," in a moral sense they both mean "right." So when we say God is just, we are saying that He always does what is right, what should be done, and that He does it consistently, without partiality or prejudice.

The word "just" and the word "righteous" are identical in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Sometimes the translators render the original word "just" and other times "righteous."

The apostle Peter says He is a God "*who impartially judges according to each man's work.*" God's treatment is never harsher than the crime demands. If God is truly just and always acts in harmony with His holy nature, then He must show His displeasure with sin by opposing it and punishing it wherever it exists, either in this life or in the life to come. He cannot enact a holy law, threaten a penalty, and then take no action when His law is broken.

Scripture makes that quite clear. God "*will by no means leave the guilty unpunished.*" Exodus 34:7. "*The soul who sins will die.*" Ezekiel 18:4 "*For the wages of sin is death.*" Romans 6:23 "*There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil.*" Romans 2:9

We're further told in Ezekiel 33:11 that God "*takes no pleasure in punishing the wicked.*" But it is the only response which is consistent with His holy nature. Thankfully, God loves those He has created and since He finds no delight in punishing them, He has taken the initiative to provide for us a "substitute" for the punishment we so rightly deserve. Need we say more?

Discuss Together

* The Bible makes it clear that God is just. What do all of us deserve from a “just” God?

* What substitute did God provide for us and how does that change our relationship with our God of justice?

* Read and discuss God’s justice.

- o Deuteronomy 32:4

- o Genesis 18:25

- o Psalm 51:4

- o Psalm 89:14

- o Psalm 98:9

- o Zephaniah 3:5

- o Jeremiah 23:5

* Share prayer requests and thank God for His justice and His substitute.

Lesson 11

God is Truth

God is the definition of truth. God is everything as God should be and His Word and revelation are completely reliable. He is absolutely dependable, without falseness of any kind. God's plan, principles, and promises are completely reliable, accurate, real, and factual. "God is real, not imaginary, vain and empty like the idols of the pagans, who represent a so-called god of their own vain imagination." Truth can be depended upon and does not fail, change, or disappoint and therefore, *"God's promises are all yes and amen in Christ Jesus"* 2 Corinthians 1:20

The practical aspect of God's unchanging truthfulness is that we can stand on His promises with full assurance of faith no matter how we feel, no matter how dire our circumstances. We can trust and rest on this great attribute of God, forever and forever.

The Old Testament word for truth comes from a root word indicating firmness, stability, or a reliable basis for support. It refers to something that rests on trustworthy facts. The New Testament word has the idea of being open and unconcealed, and therefore being real and genuine rather than false or imaginary. The God of truth is the God whose disclosures about Himself are consistent with the facts and with the nature of things as they are. He has integrity. He is who He says He is.

"But the LORD is the true God," declared the prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 10:10). The New Testament echoes that same message. For example, Jesus referred to His Father as *"the only true God"* (John 17:3). Paul commended the Thessalonians because they *"turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God"* (1 Thessalonians 1:9)

Theologian Lewis Sperry Chafer said this about how God is truth;

"The character of God is in view when He is called the God of Truth. He not only advances and confirms that which is true, but in faithfulness abides by His promise, and executes every threat or warning He has made. Apart from the element of truth in God there would be no certainty whatsoever in this life, and men would wander on in comfortless perplexity not knowing where they came or where they are going. Without truth in God, a revelation is only a mockery. On the contrary, as asserted in the Bible, "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (Romans 3:4)

Discuss Together

* Relationships are based on trust. How does it affect your relationship with God to know that He is always truthful?

* Read the following texts and discuss this characteristic - God is truth.

- o Exodus 34:6

- o Numbers 23:19

- o Psalm 19:9, 91:4

- o Isaiah 25:1

- o Daniel 4:37

- o John 17:17

- o Revelation 16:7

* Share prayer requests and pray together that you might always have the humility to accept every word of God as truth.

Lesson 12

God is Love

One of our greatest needs as human beings is to be loved. We need to know that we are important to somebody, that somebody truly cares about us, wants us, and accepts us with no strings attached; in other words, to be loved unconditionally.

Have you ever taken the time to consider the unconditional nature of God's love for you? Sadly, such thinking is often beyond us. And yet, there is nothing as significant for us to understand and to lay hold of.

A lot of our problem in grasping this amazing truth is that most everything in our lives is conditional. Money back guarantees come with hidden strings and signed documents have fine print. We live in a world where conditions exist, from our job, our marriage, our friendships, our parenting. These conditions affect how we understand who God is and how His love can be unconditional.

One of the most wonderful and inspiring passages in the Bible is found in Romans 8:31-39. Stop right now and read it and see what you think.

The word used to define God's love is the word "agape." Agape love involves action. It is expressed in the giving of oneself for the good of another, so it always demands an object. In God's case, this "object" is us.

A writer from the past has said,

"The only real mystery of the Bible, is a mystery of Love. *'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.'* That for a lost and ruined world, the Prince of Peace should leave His Throne of glory, travel down to a valley of tears, and expire by an ignominious death on the bitter tree! Love unutterable! unspeakable!"

The subject of God's love is inexhaustible. So much could and perhaps should be said about His love, but here are two Bible verses to read that will be helpful.

"I have been crucified with Christ, yet I now longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Galatians 2:20

"This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." 1 John 4:9,10

Charles Spurgeon said; "The Lord loves you not today, Christian, because of anything you are doing, or being, or saying, or thinking, but He loves you still, because His great heart is full of love, and it runneth over to you."

Discuss Together

- * Share a time when you felt God's love for you.

- * Discuss how *knowing* the truth about God's love can help you in times when you are not able to FEEL that love.

- * Read the following texts to further your understanding of God's love.
 - o John 3:16

 - o Ephesians 5:1,2

 - o Ephesians 5:25

 - o 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

 - o 1 John 3:1

 - o Jeremiah 33:3

 - o Psalm 86:15

 - o Zephaniah 3:7

- * Share prayer requests and thank God for His unconditional love for you.

Lesson 13

God is Holy

Before we can understand what it means to be holy, we must understand what it means to say that God is holy. In many ways holiness is God's central attribute. One writer actually defines it this way. "Holiness is that which makes God God." Holiness is the only attribute of God mentioned in triplicate. Two times the Bible tells us that God is holy, holy, holy (Is 6:3, Rev 4:8).

Think about that for a moment. If God says something about His character once, that's enough to settle it. When He says it twice, that's emphasis. But when He says it three times, that means it's of supreme importance. The Bible never says that God is love, love, love or mercy, mercy, mercy, or justice, justice, justice. But it does say that He is holy, holy, holy.

So let's begin by working toward a definition. Holiness is the most difficult attribute to define because it deals with the essence of God's character. Defining holiness is like defining God! It can't be done completely. However, a brilliant theologian by the name of R.C. Sproul, has written a classic on the Holiness of God, and he says this:

"The primary meaning of holy is "separate." It comes from an ancient word that meant "to cut," or to "separate." To translate this into modern language would be to use the phrase "a cut apart" or a cut above something. When we find a piece of merchandise that is outstanding, that has superior excellence, we use the expression that it is "a cut above the rest."

But God's holiness is more than just separateness. His holiness is also transcendent. The word means literally "to climb across." It is defined as "exceeding usual limits." To transcend is to rise above something, to go above and beyond a certain limit. Transcendence describes His supreme and absolute greatness. He is higher than the world. He has absolute power over the world. The world has no power over Him. It points to the infinite distance that separates Him from every creature. He is an infinite cut above everything else."

From that definition we can see holiness is that characteristic that sets Him apart from his creation. There are many verses that speak of God being "on high," "reigning," "in his holy temple," "sitting on the throne." These verses all picture God as separate from creation and reigning over it.

A.W. Tozer, who has written several books on the Attributes of God, says this. It's a bit long but how can we not include this in our brief overview of God is Holy?

"When you talk about the holiness of God, you have not only the problem of an intellectual grasp, but also a sense of personal vileness, which is almost too much to bear... Each one of us is born into a tainted world, and we learn impurity from our cradles. We nurse it in with our mother's milk, we breathe it in the very air. Our education deepens it and our experience confirms it — evil impurities everywhere. Everything is dirty; even our whitest white is dingy gray... This kind of world gets into our pores, into our nerves, until we have lost the ability to conceive of the holy.

Holiness means purity, but "purity" doesn't describe it well enough. Purity merely means that it is unmixed, with nothing else in it. But that isn't enough. We talk of moral excellency, but that isn't adequate. To be morally excellent is to exceed someone else in moral character. But when we say that God is morally excellent, who is it that He exceeds?

The angels, the seraphim? Surely He does — but that still isn't enough. We mean rectitude; we mean honor; we mean truth and righteousness; we mean all of these — uncreated and eternal. God is not now any *holier* than He ever was. For He, being unchanging and unchangeable, can never become holier than He is. And He never was holier than He is, and He'll never be any holier than now.

His moral excellence implies self-existence, for He did not get His holiness from anyone nor from anywhere. He did not go off into some vast, infinitely distant realm and there absorb His holiness; He is Himself the Holiness. He is the All-Holy, the Holy One; He is holiness itself, beyond the power of thought to grasp or of word to express, beyond the power of all praise.”

Discuss Together

* Chapter 6 of Isaiah describes a revelation of God's holiness and the result is worship, repentance, forgiveness and a willingness to go serve.

* How does this scene compare to your experiences of worshipping our Holy God?

* Read these texts and discuss your understanding of the word “Holy.”

- o Exodus 15:11
- o Psalm 30:4
- o Psalm 99:5,8,9
- o Psalm 105:42
- o Isaiah 6:3
- o Isaiah 57:15
- o 1 Peter 15,16
- o Revelation 15:4

* Share prayer requests and ask God to reveal His holiness to you.

Lesson 14

God is Wrath

Let's begin with a simple definition of wrath as one of God's attributes. It's important to get a proper definition because when we use the word wrath we tend to think of uncontrolled anger. While that may be human wrath, it is far from the truth about God's wrath. Here's a working definition: God's wrath is His hostility toward sin in all its various manifestations. God's wrath is His holy hatred of all that is unholy. It is His righteous indignation at everything that is unrighteous.

Romans 2:5-8 says; *"But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God will give to each person according to what he has done. To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger."*

Many Christians feel as if they have to apologize for this doctrine of God's wrath. Some think it's a blemish on God's character. Others think that God's wrath is inconsistent with His love. But, there is no need to apologize for God's Word so long as it is fairly and graciously presented.

As long as God is God, He cannot overlook sin. As long as God is God, He cannot stand by indifferently while His creation is destroyed. As long as God is God, He cannot dismiss lightly those who trample His holy will. As long as God is God, He cannot wink when men mock His name.

God's wrath is to be regarded as the natural expression of God's nature, which is absolute holiness, expressing itself against the willful, high-handed, deliberate, inexcusable sin and iniquity of mankind. God's wrath is always regarded in the Scripture as the just, proper, and natural expression of His holiness and righteousness which must always, under all circumstances, and at all costs be maintained.

God is not love only: He is also righteous; *"Our God is a consuming fire" Hebrews 10:29 "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" Hebrews 10:31.*

One writer said this about God's wrath. *"No effeminate, sentimental view of God or of His mercy and loving-kindness can exclude the manifestation of His just, righteous and holy anger against sin and the sinner because of his transgression. One thing only can save the sinner from the outpouring of God's righteous anger against sin, namely, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the divinely-appointed Redeemer of the world."*

Jesus drank the cup of God's wrath for us so that He could extend the cup of God's fellowship to us. It might include suffering, but not wrath. We don't receive wrath anymore. Now we get God. We get the sweet, satisfying reality of His eternal fellowship in Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit.

Discuss Together

- * How can a greater understanding of God's wrath help us to love Him more?

- * How can a greater understanding of God's wrath encourage us to share the gospel of God's grace with others?

- * Read the following verses and then discuss them so that you might have a clearer understanding of God's wrath.
 - o Numbers 11:1-10

 - o Deuteronomy 29:27

 - o Isaiah 5:25; 42:25; 47:6

 - o Jeremiah 10:24; 44:6

 - o Psalm 78:21-22; 89:30-32

 - o 1 Thessalonians 1:8,9; 2:16

 - o Revelation 6:16-17; 19:15

- * Share prayer requests and pray for those you know who have not put faith in Christ's sacrifice in "drinking" God's cup of wrath.