

We Believe in God

Journal Questions

LESSON
ONE

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT
GOD



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Journal Questions

1. What attributes of God shown in the person of Jesus Christ most amaze you about your Creator? How does the person of Jesus Christ prevent you from fashioning God into your image?
2. What kinds of things have you learned about the world around you from what God has revealed in nature apart from Scripture? Has God's revelation through creation made a difference in your daily life? Explain your answer.
3. We cannot be saved through the knowledge gained from general revelation alone. How did God use his special revelation to bring you to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? How does this impact the way you minister to those around you?
4. Think of someone you know who refuses to believe that God exists. What are some possible reasons why someone might deny God's existence? How might general revelation refute this disbelief?
5. How does the doctrine of God's transcendence comfort and reassure you in your Christian life? What is it about God's complete "otherness" that challenges you most and why?
6. In Isaiah 55:8-9, God reminds us that his ways are far beyond ours. Name a few of God's actions that are difficult for you to understand. What do you most look forward to understanding when Christ returns in glory?
7. As we learned in this lesson, "God works all things according to his eternal purposes." How does this reassure and strengthen you when you are suffering through trials and facing temptations? How can you use this truth to reassure and strengthen others?
8. The doctrine of God's providence tells us that he is always at work in our lives. When have you been most tempted to think that God is not at work in your life? What Scripture verses call you back to a right understanding of his constant care and provision for you?
9. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?

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LESSON
TWO

HOW GOD IS DIFFERENT



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1. God is wondrously different from his creation. How does God's "otherness" produce in you a holy fear of him? How does it give you confidence?
2. God is infinite, eternal and unchangeable. How do these three perfections shape your understanding of God's nature? How might an awareness of these attributes help you to encourage someone who is struggling with their faith?
3. Theologians sometimes focus more heavily on either God's transcendence or his immanence. Do you tend to see God as more distant or more near to his creation? Why must we find a balance between these two ideas?
4. Jesus is the perfect visible manifestation of God's invisible qualities. Choose an event in Jesus' life from one of the Gospels, and describe how this event should inform our understanding of God's character and attributes.
5. God's sovereignty means he exercises absolute control over his creation. What circumstances might tempt you to doubt God's sovereignty? How can you continue to have faith in God's sovereignty when it's difficult to see his control over your life and circumstances?
6. What does it mean to "be holy as God is holy"? How can you encourage those in your area of ministry to live lives that are "sacred" and "set apart" in this fallen world?
7. God's nature is to grant just rewards for righteousness and just punishments for evil. How do his just rewards for those in Christ humble you to live in gratitude? How do his just punishments for sin encourage you to reach those who are not believers in Christ?
8. Reflect for a moment on God's goodness and the love he displayed toward his Son. How does this shape your understanding of God's love for you? How can you share God's goodness with those in your sphere of influence?
9. The indirect goodness of God means that he will bring about good even through suffering and trials. Describe a time when God produced good from your trials. How might you use this experience to reassure others who are in the midst of suffering?
10. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?

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LESSON
THREE

HOW GOD IS LIKE US



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1. What have you learned about God's character as he has revealed it through his creation?
2. Scripture serves as eyeglasses to enable us to see God's character. Choose two narratives, one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament, that you find most striking in their display of God's character. Why do these two narratives resonate with you?
3. How does it encourage you in your Christian walk to know that we can become more like God in his communicable attributes? How does it challenge you?
4. Choose one of God's communicable attributes identified in the lesson. Find texts in the Bible where Jesus exhibits this quality. With Jesus' example in mind, consider how this particular attribute should impact your life and ministry. If time permits, repeat this exercise with each of the communicable attributes listed in the Westminster Shorter Catechism.
5. Because we are all created in God's image, John Calvin noted in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, that we cannot know ourselves until we know God. Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer.
6. How can studying God's communicable attributes help us understand and apply the theological propositions found in Scripture to our lives today?
7. What role should historical documents like the Westminster Shorter Catechism play in our ministries and worship services?
8. Is it right for followers of God to expect things from him? Explain your answer.
9. What is the difference between God's attributes and his historical manifestations? How does this distinction help us avoid creating false expectations of God?
10. Scripture calls us to conform our minds to the mind of God, our wills to the will of God, and our moral character to the moral character of God. Give some examples of how we can imitate God in these ways in a variety of circumstances.
11. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?

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LESSON
FOUR

GOD'S PLAN AND WORKS



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1. To what extent can human beings influence God and his actions? How does this shape your understanding of God's sovereignty?
2. What does it mean for God to change his mind? Support your answer with references from Scripture.
3. Think of a time when you or someone close to you disobeyed God. What were the immediate consequences? What effect do you think this disobedience has had, or will have, on God's plans for you or your loved one?
4. How can we avoid both fatalism and open theology in our preaching and ministry?
5. Review the different views on the order of God's decrees. Which view seems most logical to you? Why? What difference does your view make in your life and ministry?
6. The Scriptures teach that God foreknows everything and that he has foreordained everything, including eternal salvation. What do you believe is the basis for God's decrees? Are they based on his knowledge of our choices or simply on his good pleasure?
7. Is it freeing or limiting to know that God has an eternal plan for you and his creation? Explain your response.
8. How should the twofold division of creation and the understanding that all of creation is God's cosmic palace influence your life and ministry?
9. Demons exist and impact our world in a variety of ways. How should we as believers contend with the demonic forces around us in our life and ministry?
10. Only humanity has been made in the image and likeness of God. What does this mean to you personally? How should this truth affect the way we treat others who are different from us?
11. Even though God is the primary (first) cause of all things, he works through a variety of second causes to accomplish his purposes. How does this fact both comfort and challenge you?
12. How would you explain to someone else that God is holy and good when evil exists in his creation?
13. The lesson teaches that faithful followers of Christ should expect to experience God's extraordinary providence. Have you witnessed God's extraordinary providence in your own life? If so, how did this experience change you?
14. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?