The God You Can Know

The Wonderful Attributes of Your Father God

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Melanie is currently a disciplemaking trainer—equipping and encouraging Christian women everywhere to pursue a lifestyle of disciplemaking. Her heart’s desire is to encourage you to have a joyful relationship with Jesus Christ so you are willing to share that experience with others around you.

“Jesus took hold of me in 1972, and I’ve been on this great adventure ever since. My life is a gift of God, full of blessings in the midst of difficult challenges. The more I’ve learned and experienced God’s absolutely amazing grace, the more I’ve discovered my faith walk to be a joyful one. I’m still seeking that joyful walk every day…”

Melanie
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**Introduction**

**Graceful Beginnings**

The *Graceful Beginnings* Series of Bible studies are specifically designed for anyone new to the Bible—whether you are a new Christian or you just feel insecure about understanding the Bible. The lessons are basic, introducing the inexperienced Christian to God and His way of approaching life in simple terms that can be easily understood.

Just as a newborn baby needs to know the love and trustworthiness of her parents, the new Christian needs to know and experience the love and trustworthiness of her God. A *Fresh Start* is the first book in the series, laying a good foundation of truth for you to grasp and apply to your life. The other books in the series can be done in any order.

**Some Bible Basics**

Throughout these lessons, you will use a Bible to answer questions as you discover treasure about your life with Christ. The Bible is one book containing a collection of 66 books combined together for our benefit. It is divided into two main parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The Old Testament tells the story of the beginning of the world and God’s promises to mankind given through the nation of Israel. It tells how the people of Israel obeyed and disobeyed God over many, many years. All the stories and messages in the Old Testament lead up to Jesus Christ’s coming to the earth.

The New Testament tells the story of Jesus Christ, the early Christians, and God’s promises to all those who believe in Jesus. You can think of the Old Testament as “before Christ” and the New Testament as “after Christ.”

Each book of the Bible is divided into chapters and verses within those chapters to make it easier to study. Bible references include the book name, chapter number and verse number(s). For example, Ephesians 2:8 refers to the New Testament book of Ephesians, the 2nd chapter, and verse 8 within that 2nd chapter. Printed Bibles have a “Table of Contents” in the front to help you locate books by page number. Bible apps also have a contents list by book and chapter.

The Bible verses highlighted in each lesson are from the New International Version® (NIV®) unless otherwise indicated. You can use any version of the Bible to answer the questions, but using a more easy-to-read translation (NIV, NIRV, NLT, NET, ESV) will help you gain confidence in understanding what you are reading. You can find all these translations in the “YouVersion App” or on [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com).

This study capitalizes certain pronouns referring to God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit—He, Him, His, Himself—just to make the reading of the study information less confusing. Some Bible translations likewise capitalize those pronouns referring to God; others do not. It is simply a matter of preference, not a requirement.

**The God You Can Know**

*The God You Can Know* lessons focus on the attributes of God—those character qualities of God that He has revealed about Himself. God’s greatness is far beyond human understanding. But, His Word does give us part of the picture. And, that picture reveals an awesome God!

An “attribute” is a quality or characteristic of someone or something. For a person, an attribute is something generally true about that person. If someone says that you are always kind, that’s an attribute of you. If someone says that you are always patient, that’s an attribute of you. Attributes describe someone so that we can know more about him or her.
The attributes of God are things we CAN know about God. They describe His character and are true about Him all the time. God has revealed these attributes about Himself so we can know who He is. By knowing who He is, we can know Him better. He is truly The God You Can Know. And, by knowing Him, we can learn to trust Him with our lives.

Trust (faith) is always an issue of credibility. It is hard to trust God if you don’t know Him. The more you know Him, the easier it is to trust Him. You don’t have more faith by talking about faith. Getting to know the object of your faith, your God, increases your confidence in Him. Knowing God’s character plus His promises gives you plenty of reasons to consider Him trustworthy. The Bible describes that confidence to be like having your feet firmly planted on solid rock—with God as your Rock. He is a trustworthy God.

“So I am always thinking that when God reveals a particular thing about Himself, He is helping me know Him. That is the point of saying things about Himself or doing particular things in the world. He is helping me know Him, the true God, a person, so that my delight can be in Him...” (John Piper, desiringgod.org, Interview on March 8, 2016)

TRUSTING YOUR FATHER GOD

Your God is also a trustworthy Father. Jesus continually taught His disciples to consider God as their Father. This God is your Father God, too. The moment you placed your trust in Jesus Christ for your salvation, you were adopted into God’s family as His child. He is the perfect Father, the most loving Father, the most dependable Father, and the Father who cares about your every need.

The Apostle Paul, who wrote several books of the New Testament, describes it this way,

“Those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. The Spirit you received doesn’t make you slaves. Otherwise you would live in fear again. Instead, the Holy Spirit you received made you God’s adopted child. By the Spirit’s power we call God Abba. Abba means Father. The Spirit himself joins with our spirits. Together they tell us that we are God’s children.” (Romans 8:14-16)

Our Father God’s love for us is deep and amazing.

“See what amazing love the Father has given us! Because of it, we are called children of God. And that’s what we really are! (1 John 3:1)"

Jesus continually encouraged His followers to call God, “Father.” He taught them to pray to their Father God, whom they could trust.

Your Father knows what you need even before you ask him. “This is how you should pray. ‘Our Father in heaven, may your name be honored.’” (Matthew 6:8-9)

Wait a minute. What if you didn’t have such a good earthly father! Your concept of a father might be pretty scary. God knows that. But, He wants you to know that you are dearly loved by your Father God. Dearly loved.

Think of the best father in any movie or TV show. Who comes to mind? God is even better than that father. And, through these lessons, you will become familiar with the character of God—those attributes that help you to know Him well, love Him wholeheartedly, and gain the confidence to trust Him as your Father God.

At the end of each lesson, we will include three things to help you renew your mind with truth about God:

1) Bible verse to learn

To renew your thinking and make part of your life as you begin this new adventure.
Memorizing Bible verses is not just something “to do.” You are planting God’s words to you in your mind. The Bible calls it “renewing your mind” with truth about who God is and who you are.

If your Bible is a different translation from the one given in The God You Can Know, feel free to memorize the verse from your Bible rather than what is given. The point is to begin a habit of memorizing Scripture. You will be surprised at how soon it just flows from your mind.

2) **Response in prayer & praise**

To help you begin regular conversation with your Father God who loves you dearly.

You will be encouraged to talk to your Heavenly Father about anything and everything. Tell Him what you are thinking and feeling. He is someone you can trust.

3) **Discover God the Father**

Bible reading of prayers and praises from both the Old Testament and New Testament.

Spend a few minutes each day reading these prayers and reflecting on how each prayer reveals someone’s understanding of and trust in God. Get to know Him well—this One who loves you dearly.

*[For further study: The website http://www.bible.org/ has an excellent series of articles on the attributes of God called “Let Me See Thy Glory - A Study of the Attributes of God.”]*

**OVERVIEW OF THE ATTRIBUTES**

- **God’s SOVEREIGNTY:** God is the sovereign ruler of His creation. He rules it with supreme authority and power.

  “How great you are, O Sovereign LORD! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears.” (2 Samuel 7:22)

- **God’s OMNIPOTENCE, OMNIPRESENCE, & OMNISCIENCE** *(the Omnis):* God’s power is more powerful than anything or anyone else in the entire universe. God’s presence is everywhere at the same time. God knows everything there is to know.

  “You are all around me, behind me and in front of me. You hold me in your power. I’m amazed at how well you know me. It’s more than I can understand.” (Psalm 139:5-6 NIRV)

- **God’s HOLINESS:** God is holy. He is set apart from anything that is sinful or evil.

  “Your eyes are too pure to look on evil. You cannot tolerate wrongdoing.” (Habakkuk 1:13a)

- **God’s JUSTICE:** God always does what is morally right and fair.

  “He did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. (Romans 3:26)

- **God’s GRACE:** God’s grace is His undeserved favor abundantly poured out on those who desperately need Him.

  “Our Lord poured out more and more of his grace on me. Along with it came faith and love from Christ Jesus.” (1 Timothy 1:14 NIRV)
✓ God’s GOODNESS: God is good all the time — even in the tough times, in different ways for each person, and in what He allows or doesn’t allow into our lives.

“You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees.” (Psalm 119:68)

✓ God’s LOVE: God’s love is patient, kind, forgiving and considers what is best for the one being loved.

"The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love." (Psalm 103:8)

✓ God’s JOY: God’s joy finds great pleasure in His creation and His creatures, especially people who trust in Him.

"... The joy of the Lord makes you strong." (Nehemiah 8:10 NIRV)

Your Father God’s love for you is deep and amazing. Bask in it!

Enjoy!
1: God’s Sovereignty

“How great you are, O Sovereign LORD! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears.” (2 Samuel 7:22)

An “attribute” is a quality or characteristic of someone or something. Attributes describe someone so that we can know more about him or her. The attributes of God are things we can know about God. They are true about Him all the time. God has revealed these attributes about Himself so we can know who He is. And, by knowing Him, we can choose to trust Him with our lives.

What words come to mind when you think about the character of God?

Do you feel that He is someone you can know?

ATTRIBUTE #1: SOVEREIGNTY

The first attribute we will study is God’s SOVEREIGNTY.

How do you feel about this phrase, “God’s sovereignty?”

God is sovereign. That is a fact. He is called “Sovereign Lord” over 300 times in the Bible.

Read 2 Samuel 7:22.

What is declared about God in this verse?

The dictionary definition of sovereign is “self-governing, independent, possessing supreme power or authority.” At the end of the word “sovereign” is the word “reign.” We say that a king “reigns.” That means he is the ruler, the one with the right to make the rules. Someone who is sovereign is the ruler, the king, and the one who has the right to make the rules.

Read 1 Chronicles 29:11-12.

What do these verses state about God?
Read Deuteronomy 10:14-17.

What or who is under God’s sovereignty?

Read 1 Samuel 2:6-8.

What or who is under God’s sovereignty?

Read Psalm 50:10-11.

What or who is under God’s sovereignty?

As you consider the sovereignty of God from these above verses, what do you think could stop God’s plans from being carried out in your life or in the life of someone you love?

Nothing can stop God. He will accomplish anything and everything in our lives for our good.

Read Exodus 20:11.

About 2 million people heard God speak those words to them. What gives God the right to be king over everything?

God Himself told us in many places in the Bible that He created everything. God is sovereign—the king—over the universe, over the earth, over all the creatures on the earth, and over every human being. If you create something, do you have the right to make the rules concerning how your creation should live and work? **God is the sovereign ruler of His creation. He rules it with supreme authority and power.**

If God is the sovereign ruler of His creation, that means He is the sovereign ruler of you. Yet, adding together God’s sovereignty with His great love expressed through the gift of His Son Jesus should give you great security and confidence.

If you believed and continually remembered this truth that your God is sovereign, how might that influence your life?
We need to think of Him as our sovereign king and be willing to respect Him and obey Him. We can trust His care for His creation, including us. **Our God is the sovereign ruler of His creation. He rules it with supreme authority and power.**

_Though God is the sovereign ruler, He invites you to come to Him with your needs. Are you willing to recognize God’s authority over you—to trust that He knows what is best for you?_

**TRUSTING YOUR FATHER GOD**

1) **Bible verse to learn:**

“How great you are, O Sovereign LORD! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears.” (2 Samuel 7:22 NIV)

2) **Response in prayer & praise:**

You can go to your Father God, ruler over everything, and talk to Him about anything. When you talk to your Father God, approach Him with humility and respect for His absolute authority. Choose a heart of obedience. He is trustworthy.

3) **Discover God the Father:**

Spend a few minutes reading these prayers and reflecting on how each prayer reveals someone’s understanding of and trust in God. Get to know Him well—this One who loves you dearly.

**Read 1 Kings 18:16-40.**

_Reflect on what you read._

**Read 2 Kings 18:28-19:37.**

_Reflect on what you read._
THE GOD YOU CAN KNOW

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“You are all around me, behind me and in front of me. You hold me in your power. I’m amazed at how well you know me. It’s more than I can understand.” (Psalm 139:5-6 NIRV)

THE GOD YOU CAN KNOW

✓ God’s SOVEREIGNTY: God is the sovereign ruler of His creation. He rules it with supreme authority and power.

ATTRIBUTE #2: THE OMNIS

Remember that an attribute is a word someone could use to describe you that is true all the time. Knowing your attributes will help someone to know you better. Just like that, attributes of our Father God are those descriptions of God that tell us who He is so that we can know Him better, and by knowing Him better, we can trust Him as our Father. We have a God we can know.

Lesson 1 covered God’s Sovereignty. In this lesson, we will be studying three of God’s attributes sometimes called “the Omnis.” The word omni means “all.” The attributes of God that are the Omnis are: 1) omnipotence, 2) omnipresence, and 3) omniscience. Let’s break them down and see what they mean.

Omnipotence

God’s OMNIPOTENCE. We know the first part “omni” means all and the second part “potence” means powerful. So, putting those two together, we get “all powerful.” Omnipotence refers to God’s power. God is all powerful—more powerful than anything or anyone else in the entire universe.

*Name some things or some people you think are powerful. After each one, say, “God is more powerful than that.”*

You won’t read the word “omnipotence” in the Bible, but you will read many words that describe God’s power. One particular name of God refers to His omnipotence. That name is “Almighty.”

God is called “the Almighty” or “Lord Almighty” 345 times in the Bible. The prophet Jeremiah in the Old Testament talked about God’s power a lot and called Him the Lord Almighty.

Read Jeremiah 32:17.

*What did Jeremiah call God at the beginning?*

*What did Jeremiah say was too hard for God, his king?*
When you think of God's power, what comes to your mind?

God uses His power to do many things—to create and to perform miracles like parting the Red Sea, winning battles, and healing people. Every time Jesus healed someone, that was God's power at work. Anyone who trusts in God can experience His power.

Read Ephesians 1:19-20.

What does Paul pray for Christians to know?

For whom is God's power at work?

How much power does it require to make a dead man alive again?

God's power raised Jesus, who had died on the cross, raised Him up alive and with a new body that would never die again. That's pretty powerful, isn't it?

Read Ephesians 3:20.

What does Paul say about how powerful God is?

And, where is His power working?

God uses His power to work for us and in us. And, we can ask Him to do that in our lives.

Do you feel confident that you can ask Him to work in your life, and He will do it?
That’s the first omni — omnipotence, which means all powerful. **God is more powerful than anything or anyone else in the entire universe.**

**Omnipresence**

The second omni is OMNIPRESENCE, which means “all presence.” When we say that God has “all presence” we mean that God is present everywhere at the same time. There isn’t any place in the entire universe where God cannot be found. God is present everywhere at the same time.

This is so well described in Psalm 139. Psalms are songs written by those who loved God and wanted to speak or sing His praises.

**Read Psalm 139:5-6.**

> David, who is the psalm writer here, is talking to God as he is writing. How does he describe God’s presence with him?

**Read Psalm 139:7-10, 18.**

> Where can we go to get away from God?

> Is there any place far enough away that He can’t find us? Or, can someone hide us so God can’t find us?

> Can you go to a place where God is not with you or cannot hear you calling out to Him?

The Bible teaches that God is everywhere at the same time. God is near you as you go about your daily schedule, whether to work, school, stores, or home. God is near you at each place. God is with you everywhere. In fact, wherever you go…He is already there! Even in the worst situation or location, you might not get a cell signal, but God is not blocked out! Ever!

> How does that give you comfort?

> When are some times that you need to remember that God is always wherever you are?
David, in his psalm, reminded himself that God was not only there but that His hand would be holding him close. And, he declares that God is still there with him even while he is sleeping.

*Next time you are scared or hurt or in life’s dark places, remember that God is with you right then. Picture Him holding your hand and gain comfort from that.*

So, the second omni is omnipresence, which means all presence. **God is present everywhere at the same time.**

**Omniscience**

The third omni is OMNISCIENCE. It’s spelled *omni-science*. So, it does mean God knows everything there is to know about science. But, it’s more than that. Our word “science” comes from an old Latin word that means “to know” or “knowing.” So, when we talk about God’s omniscience, we are saying that God is “all knowing.” That means that God knows everything there is to know. [Note: the word “perception” in the lesson title means to know.]

That can really baffle our minds. But, let’s talk about how that affects you personally. David wrote about this in the same psalm we just read.

**Read Psalm 139:1-4.**

*How many times did David use the word “know” or similar words (perceive, discern, etc.)?*

*What does God know about you?*

*Can you hide anything from God?*

*Does anything good or bad in your life escape His notice or surprise Him?*

**Read Psalm 139:6.**

*Write this verse in the space below.*
Knowing that God knows you well—having created you to be the special, unique person you are—how does your heart feel about that?

God knows what is going on in your life. He also knows what is going on deep in your heart. And, He knows what is best for you!

The third omni is omniscience, which means, "all knowing." God knows everything there is to know about everything.

The Omnis are three truths that are characteristics of God alone. What those words mean is that God is more powerful than anything or anyone else in the entire universe, is present everywhere at the same time, and knows everything there is to know.

So, what should that mean for your life? This is the truth you need to know and remember from this lesson: God is always near you, He knows what is going on in your life, and He can do something about it. That should give you confidence to handle anything.

Think of those 3 Omnis as a chair. When you sit on a chair, you get to rest. God wants you to rest knowing that He is always near you, He knows what is going on in your life, and He can do something about it. The Bible says that you can rest on that. And, you can trust Him in whatever He chooses to do for any situation you find yourself in today, tomorrow or the next day. Can you do that?

TRUSTING YOUR FATHER GOD

1) Bible verse to learn:

“You are all around me, behind me and in front of me. You hold me in your power. I’m amazed at how well you know me. It’s more than I can understand.” (Psalm 139:5-6 NIV)

2) Response in prayer & praise:

When you talk to your Father God, humbly realize He can do anything. And, although He cares about every detail in your life, think about how small your problems are compared with how awesome your Father God is!

Ask Him to help you trust that He is always near you, that God knows what is going on in your life, and that He can do something about it. Tell Him about your deepest concern then wait and see what your Father God does.

3) Discover God the Father:

Spend a few minutes reading these prayers and reflecting on how each prayer reveals someone’s understanding of and trust in God. Get to know Him well—this One who loves you dearly.

Read Psalm 139.

Reflect on what you read.
Read 2 Chronicles 20:1-30.

Reflect on what you read.
3: God's Holiness

“Your eyes are too pure to look on evil. You cannot tolerate wrongdoing.” (Habakkuk 1:13a)

THE GOD YOU CAN KNOW

✓ God’s SOVEREIGNTY: God is the sovereign ruler of His creation. He rules it with supreme authority and power.

✓ God’s OMNIPOTENCE, OMNIPRESENCE, & OMNISCIENCE (the Omnis): God’s power is more powerful than anything or anyone else in the entire universe. God’s presence is everywhere at the same time. God knows everything there is to know.

ATTRIBUTE #3: HOLINESS

This lesson is about God’s HOLINESS.

When I say the word “holiness,” what comes to your mind?

Holiness is the state or quality of being holy. “Holy” is used more than any other word in the Bible to describe God so it must be very important. The word “holy” by itself means, “to set apart.” That means one thing is totally separated from something else. So, holiness means “to be set apart.” God is also set apart from something. In the Bible, God is called “the Holy One of Israel” and “the Holy God.” So, He is totally set apart, but from what?

The Bible teaches that our God is set apart from these:

- **Set apart from any other name.** God’s name is holy. His name is set apart from any other name in the entire universe. That includes the names of other gods that people want to worship instead of the one true God.

- **Set apart from His creation.** God is not like anything or anyone He has created. That includes angels and people. God is set apart from His creation.

- **Set apart from anything that is sinful or evil.** In fact, this is what is stressed the most about God in the Bible. He is the most “holy,” and no one is as “holy” as He is. He is perfect.

“The word holy calls attention to all that God is. It reminds us that His love is holy love, His justice is holy justice, His mercy is holy mercy, His knowledge is holy knowledge, His spirit is holy spirit.” (R. C. Sproul, The Holiness of God, p. 57)

Read Habakkuk 1:13.

Habakkuk lived at the time of the Babylonian invasion of Jerusalem (~600 BC).

How does Habakkuk describe God at the beginning of the verse?
In God’s holiness, He cannot even look on evil or wrongdoing. It is a unique part of His character—who He is. God’s holiness sets him apart from anything that is sinful or evil.

*If God is perfectly good all the time, what are some things that God cannot do?*

Read James 1:13.

*What is something else that God will not do?*

*It is very comforting to know that our God can be trusted to be good all the time. Can human beings be perfectly good all the time?*

*Evil and wrongdoing that people do are called “sin” in the Bible. Give some examples of human sins.*

When God created Adam and Eve, God designed people to have a relationship with Him. Because Adam and Eve disobeyed Him, sin entered the world. You can read about this in Genesis chapter 3. Adam and Eve became separated from the perfect fellowship they had with God. And, all people born after them were born sinners. What a bummer!

But, if human beings are sinful, this creates a problem because God is set apart from sin. That’s His holiness. He hates sin and must judge it. The Bible tells us that our sins separate us from Him. God doesn’t want us to be separated from Him forever. So He made a way to bring us back to Him. But, this meant getting rid of our sin.

God had a marvelous plan. His own Son would come to earth to be born as a baby, grow up to live as a human just like us, and die for our sins so we could be forgiven of them. That’s the wonder of Christmas. At Christmas, we celebrate God’s absolutely marvelous plan. When we trust in Jesus, He will remove our sin from us so we are no longer separated from Him. Amazing gift!

Read Isaiah 1:18.

*What is God’s promise to us?*
During your school days, did you have a teacher who marked wrong answers with red ink? Red usually says, “That’s wrong. That’s not acceptable.” When God says our sins are bright red, He is saying the wrong things we do are not acceptable to a holy God.

*What do you think the phrase “white as snow” means?*

Freshly fallen snow looks so pristine, doesn’t it? Pure and clean. The phrase “white like wool” refers to freshly prepared sheep’s wool that is perfectly clean and hasn’t been dyed with any colors yet. It’s also pure and clean. That’s what God does to our sin the moment we trust in Jesus so we can get close to Him as our Father God.

And, here is the absolutely even-more-wonderful part: as we live each day as believers in Jesus, God continues to cleanse our sin from us so we can be close to Him.

*We can enjoy our relationship with a holy God who loves us dearly, the kind of relationship that He created us to enjoy.*

**Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.**

*What does God do to our sin?*

*What do we get from Christ?*

When God looks at us, He doesn’t see sin in our lives. Jesus takes away our sin. We are no longer separated from our holy God. He sees Jesus’ righteousness instead. Our sins are washed white as snow. This is called, “The Great Exchange.” Jesus takes our sin; we receive His righteousness. We can only marvel at God’s goodness to us in this gift.

**Read 1 Peter 1:14-16.**

*What does God desire for us?*

Holiness means “to be set apart.” God desires that we would choose to live set apart from anything that is sinful or evil. Then, we would reflect His character in our own lives.

**Read 1 Corinthians 10:13.**

*What does God promise to us when we are tempted?*
What confidence does knowing this give you?

Temptation to do wrong is part of life here on earth. Those temptations are not coming from God. Instead, He provides a way of escape for every temptation. That’s His promise.

God’s holiness means He is set apart from anything that is sinful or evil. God cleanses us from sin when we trust in Jesus so that we are no longer separated from Him.

Through His Spirit inside us He also helps us live as holy people, set apart from sin in our own lives.

TRUSTING YOUR FATHER GOD

1) Bible verse to learn:

“Your eyes are too pure to look on evil. You cannot tolerate wrongdoing.” (Habakkuk 1:13a)

2) Response in prayer & praise:

As you approach your Father God, you can thank Him for His marvelous plan and for continuing to cleanse you of sin so you aren’t separated from Him ever again. You can trust Him to always be good to you and those you love.

Reverence your Father God in your heart as the Holy One. Grasping His holiness will lead you to desire to be like Him in hating and avoiding evil. You can trust Him to never tempt you to do anything wrong.

3) Discover God the Father:

Spend a few minutes reading and reflecting on what Habakkuk’s prayers reveal about his understanding of and trust in God. Get to know Him well—this One who loves you dearly.

Read Habakkuk chapter 1.

Reflect on what you read.
Read Habakkuk chapter 2.

Reflect on what you read.

Read Habakkuk chapter 3.

Reflect on what you read.
4: God’s Justice

“He did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.” (Romans 3:26)

THE GOD YOU CAN KNOW

✓ God’s SOVEREIGNTY: God is the sovereign ruler of His creation. He rules it with supreme authority and power.

✓ God’s OMNIPOTENCE, OMNIPRESENCE, & OMNISCIENCE (the Omnis): God’s power is more powerful than anything or anyone else in the entire universe. God’s presence is everywhere at the same time. God knows everything there is to know.

✓ God’s HOLINESS: God is holy. He is set apart from anything that is sinful or evil.

ATTRIBUTE #4: JUSTICE

God’s holiness is related to another attribute which we will study in this lesson—God’s JUSTICE.

When are you likely to want justice?

Justice means that someone is always concerned with two things—being right and being fair. Justice means, “always doing what is morally right and fair.” That’s how you likely want to be treated by others whenever there is a problem, isn’t it? You want them to do what is right and to be fair about it.

Our God always acts with justice. It is the natural expression of His holiness. Remember we said that God’s holiness always sets Him apart from anything that is sinful or evil. The Bible says that God hates sin and has declared that sin is wrong and must be punished by death.

The apostle Paul wrote about God’s justice in the book of Romans.

Read Romans 3:23.

What does this verse declare about all people?

Read Romans 5:12.

What happened to all people because of sin?
Since everyone has sinned, everyone is declared guilty of sin by God's justice. He's being right and fair. And, each guilty person must pay a penalty. The Bible says the penalty for sin is death. That's God's justice. **God's justice always does what is morally right and fair.** It's fair for God to say anyone who sins must be declared guilty and pay a penalty.

In our society, whenever a person is declared guilty of committing a crime, they have to pay the penalty for what they did wrong. They usually go to prison and are held captive in prison until the penalty is paid—maybe 3 months or 2 years, sometimes 20 years or more.

In the Old Testament, God decided that certain animals would die to pay the penalty for the sins of His people. By the deaths of those animals, called sacrifices, the people would be set free from being guilty for a little while, until the people did bad things again. But, this was only a temporary plan.

God had a better plan. He loves people so much that He came to earth Himself as a man named Jesus who lived a perfect life and died on the cross as the sacrifice for our sins. Jesus paid the penalty for sin that God's justice demands. Jesus paid this penalty for us so that we would not have to do it nor would any animals ever have to do it again!

Paul describes it beautifully in Romans 3.

**Read Romans 3:24-26.**

*How is God's justice satisfied?*

God's justice is right and fair. The NIRV translation of verse 26 clearly describes this:

"**God did that to prove in our own time that he is fair. He proved that he is right. He also made right with himself those who believe in Jesus.** (Romans 3:26 NIRV)"

Jesus paid the penalty for every wrong thing that anyone has ever done or will do in the future. God's justice is satisfied. So, God can declare that anyone who trusts in Jesus is "set free" from having to pay the penalty for their sin. Everyone who trusts in Jesus is free from being held captive by his or her sins.

What a great deal! Being set free is a great thing. God's justice sets free everyone who trusts that His Son Jesus Christ paid the penalty for their sins. God can do that because the penalty has been paid for all time. When you trust in Jesus you receive complete forgiveness for ALL of your sins. This sets you free from being afraid of God.

Isn't it easier to not be afraid of God if you know that He forgives you for all the bad things you do? Instead, you can be confident that God loves you dearly.

*Have you lived in fear of God, being afraid of Him?*

*How does the truth that you are set free from being afraid of God make you feel now?*
And, if you aren’t afraid of God, you are set free to love Him back with your whole heart. Isn’t that true? It’s easier to love someone that you know loves you!

You are also set free to do what is morally right and fair in your own life.

Read Micah 6:8.

*God desires that we live life God’s way. How is it described in Micah?*

**God’s justice always does what is morally right and fair.** He desires that we uphold justice in our lives as well. The New Testament writings teach us how to live life God’s way, following the example of Jesus Christ. God will enable you to live that way. He wants you to live that way. Is that something you’d like to do?

**TRUSTING YOUR FATHER GOD**

1) **Bible verse to learn:**

“He did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.” (Romans 3:26)

2) **Response in prayer & praise:**

Thank Jesus for paying the penalty for your sin so that your Father God can set you free from sin’s penalty and forgive all your sins instead.

Because God’s justice has set you free from the penalty of sin, you are free to love Him back with your whole heart. Have you learned to love your Father God? How do you express your love for Him?

Also, ask your Father God to show you how to do for others what is right and fair just like your God.

3) **Discover God the Father:**

Spend a few minutes each day reading and reflecting on how Jonah responds with trust or lack of trust in God. Get to know Him well—this One who loves you dearly.

Read Jonah chapter 1.

*Reflect on what you read.*
Read Jonah chapter 2.

Reflect on what you read.

Read Jonah chapter 3.

Reflect on what you read.

Read Jonah chapter 4.

Reflect on what you read.
5: God's Grace

"Our Lord poured out more and more of his grace on me. Along with it came faith and love from Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 1:14 NIRV)

THE GOD YOU CAN KNOW

✓ God’s SOVEREIGNTY: God is the sovereign ruler of His creation. He rules it with supreme authority and power.

✓ God's OMNIPOTENCE, OMNIPRESENCE, & OMNISCIENCE (the Omnis): God’s power is more powerful than anything or anyone else in the entire universe. God’s presence is everywhere at the same time. God knows everything there is to know.

✓ God’s HOLINESS: God is holy. He is set apart from anything that is sinful or evil.

✓ God’s JUSTICE: God always does what is morally right and fair.

ATTRIBUTE #5: GRACE

Now, we are going to learn about God's GRACE.

What do you think “grace” means?

For Christians, “grace” is a very special word. You've probably heard the word but may not know what it means. Grace means “undeserved favor.” God’s grace is His undeserved favor abundantly poured out on those who desperately need Him.

You may know some girls or women named Grace or Gracie. A lot of churches have the word “grace” as part of their name. And, “Amazing Grace” is one of the most well-known songs worldwide. It's written by a man named John Newton who understood the immensity of God’s grace in his life.

John Newton lived in England over 200 years ago. When John was a little boy, his mama taught him Bible stories and prayed that he would grow up to become a minister. Sadly, when he was only 6, his mama died. Poor John! His father was a ship captain who would be gone for months or years at a time. His new stepmother didn't want him and ignored him. So, John was lonely and angry. He started acting very badly. It looked like he forgot everything his mama taught him.

One night, John was kidnapped. He tried to escape but some men dragged him onto one of England’s war ships, threw him into a dark hole, and forced him to work on the ship. That made him angrier. He refused to follow the captain’s orders so he was often whipped and put in chains. His bad attitude and bad language were worse than that of the other sailors. And, John made fun of anyone who believed in God. He thought that life had treated him badly, so John decided to be cruel to others.

John Newton got his own ship and became a slave trader. A slave is forced to work for someone else without pay, against her will, often in chains, without any freedoms at all. John Newton kidnapped African people, chained them in his ship, and sailed them to North America to be sold as slaves. The bad boy became a bad man, didn't he?
Then, one day, a violent storm began to rip his ship apart. John felt helpless and very afraid because he couldn’t swim. Suddenly, he remembered Bible verses his mama had taught him. John cried out to God, “Lord, have mercy on us!” But, then he thought, “What mercy can there be for a wretch like me?” A wretch is a wicked, unhappy person. John told God he was sorry for turning away from Him and for doing so much wrong. The storm ended, and John’s life was spared. He knew it was God’s doing!

So, John found a Bible and read how Jesus could forgive him for all the bad things he did. John Newton trusted in Jesus to forgive him. Over time, he stopped using bad words, stopped being angry all the time, and stopped being a slave trader. In fact, he joined others who fought against the slave trade in England. Before he died, it was outlawed. That was great news for John.

Remember that his mother prayed for him to become a minister. God answered that prayer with a, “Yes.” John became the pastor of several churches, traveled around England telling how God saved a wretch like him, and wrote lots of songs including “Amazing Grace.”

As stated at the beginning of this lesson, the word “grace” means “undeserved favor.” In the Bible, grace is God giving favor to someone, not because they are good enough to deserve it but because His love chooses to do so.

Did John Newton deserve God’s favor? No. He even called himself a wretch—a wicked, unhappy person. Yet, when he trusted Jesus, God’s grace saved John from death, completely forgave him for all his sins, and gave him a brand new life.

His story is much like the prodigal son in the Bible. Jesus told the story of a family with 2 sons. The younger son told his dad one day that he wanted to take his share of the family money and go away to see the world rather than stay home and help his dad run the farm. So, he did. But, he was very reckless with his money and spent it all while doing bad things—like John Newton did when he was away from home.

Anyway, this younger son got a job feeding pigs, but even that wasn’t enough for him to buy food to take care of himself. He was miserable. So, he decided to go back home and ask his dad to let him be a servant. What do you think his father did? Was he angry with him for leaving in the first place and spending all his money? Or, was he happy to see his young son again? Let’s find out.


_Focusing on verse 20, what was the father doing?_

_What actions did he take when he saw his boy coming home?_

_Did his dad have just a little bit of love for his boy or a lot of love?_

_Why did the father celebrate?_
Wow! Did you expect that? The prodigal son didn’t deserve his father’s favor. He had done some bad things. But, his dad was looking for him to come home. That is a picture of God’s grace. The Bible says that God’s grace is so abundant it’s like a cup overflowing.

Read 1 Timothy 1:13-14.

*How does Paul describe his own worthiness?*

*How does Paul describe God’s grace?*

*What do you picture in your mind when you think of something being poured out abundantly?*

Paul, the writer of the letter, was describing himself, but doesn’t it also describe John Newton and what God did for him? No longer was John the bad man, the slave trader. Now, he was John, the beloved child of God, the one who taught many people about Jesus and wrote songs to praise Him like “Amazing Grace.”

That song has become one of the favorite songs of all time. When John Newton was writing the song, he remembered that terrible storm and how wonderful it was to be right with God at last. He praised God for His grace. This is what he wrote:

*Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!*
*I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see.*
*Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;*
*How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!*  
*Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come;*
*Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.*

*When he wrote “the hour I first believed,” when was that?*

He was thinking of that time when he was so afraid, wasn’t he? None of us deserve God’s favor because we all do bad things called sin.

Remember how that prodigal son’s father was so filled with love he was ready to forgive his son for all the bad things he did and welcome him home? That’s how Father God welcomed John Newton home to Him. That’s how your Father God welcomed you when you trusted in Jesus.

**God’s grace is His undeserved favor abundantly poured out on those who desperately need him.** His grace overflows to you every single day. You are completely forgiven and covered in God’s grace.
God gives His favor to someone not because they are good enough to deserve it but because His love chooses to do so. We all receive it when we trust in Jesus. Isn’t God’s grace amazing!

TRUSTING YOUR FATHER GOD

1) Bible verse to learn:

“Our Lord poured out more and more of his grace on me. Along with it came faith and love from Christ Jesus.” (1 Timothy 1:14 NIRV)

2) Response in prayer & praise:

Reread 1 Timothy 1:13-14. Make these verses personal. Replace Paul’s experience with your own experience.

Use any creative means to express gratitude for God’s amazing grace toward you—drawing, painting, prose, poetry, song, or prayer. An extra page is added at the end of this lesson for you. This is your praise to God today.

3) Discover God the Father:

Spend a few minutes each day reading these prayers and reflecting on how each prayer reveals someone’s understanding of and trust in God. Get to know Him well—this One who loves you dearly.

Read Psalm 103.

Reflect on what you read.

Read Psalm 116.

Reflect on what you read.
6: God's Goodness

“You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees.” (Psalm 119:68)

THE GOD YOU CAN KNOW

✓ God's SOVEREIGNTY: God is the sovereign ruler of His creation. He rules it with supreme authority and power.
✓ God's OMNIPOTENCE, OMNIPRESENCE, & OMNISCIENCE (the Omnis): God's power is more powerful than anything or anyone else in the entire universe. God's presence is everywhere at the same time. God knows everything there is to know.
✓ God's HOLINESS: God is holy. He is set apart from anything that is sinful or evil.
✓ God's JUSTICE: God always does what is morally right and fair.
✓ God's GRACE: God's grace is His undeserved favor abundantly poured out on those who desperately need Him.

ATTRIBUTE #6: GOODNESS

Our lesson today will focus on God's GOODNESS.

When I say that “you are a good person,” what do you think I’m talking about?

You might think of someone who never does anything wrong, who always does everything right. You might think of someone who is very kind and generous. Well, God is the ultimate one who is good, who “always does everything right and is always kind and generous.” Let’s talk about what that really means.

Think about it. Whenever you see movies or read books about Jesus, what color clothing is Jesus usually wearing?

Usually, Jesus is presented as wearing white. Now, He probably didn’t wear white. Men back then wore clothes that were dyed with colors or left a natural looking tan. And, remember they didn’t have washing machines so no one’s clothes would have stayed white for very long!

So, why do you think artists or movies almost always present Jesus wearing white clothes?

For one thing, you’ll know which one in the picture is Jesus because we don’t have any photos to know what He looked like. You always know the man in white is Jesus. Perhaps your answer to the above question was that
white represents Jesus as being perfect because He never did any of the bad things called sin. That's a reasonable answer. White would definitely represent His purity.

That white color also represents His goodness. One time when Jesus was on a mountain with Peter, James and John, something happened to His clothes.

**Read Mark 9:2-8.**

*Describe what happened.*

Jesus’ clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could ever bleach them. This was to show His disciples that He really was God. Jesus is the God-man who never sinned. The color white represents His goodness. And, God is good all the time. Remember our lesson on God’s holiness?

That's an important truth for you to know and trust. "**GOD IS GOOD ALL THE TIME.**"

**Read Psalm 119:68.**

*What does this verse say about God?*

The Bible says that everything about God is good—He is good in Himself, and what He does is good. That means God allows nothing to happen to His children—to those who love Him—that is not for their good. God gives to His children only that which is good. **God is good all the time,** and He is at work in our lives for good.

**Read Romans 8:28.**

*What is promised about God at work in our lives?*

But, you might ask, what about the tough things that happen to us? Someone gets very sick, loses a job, or has to move far away from family and friends. Is God being good then? What must be the answer to that question? **YES!** Why? Because **God is good all the time.**

You need to know 3 truths about God’s goodness.

**Truth #1: God is good even in the tough times.**

Let me ask you some questions. As a child, did your parents or other authority ever make you do something that was hard to do? As an adult, have you ever tasked children or students with things that were hard to do, perhaps very hard, in order for them to learn a new skill? No doubt the answer to both questions is, “Yes, of course!”
Consider the parent/child relationship. Parents demonstrate love for their children even when they won't let the children buy something they want. Parents are being good to their children when they won't let them go someplace the children think they have to go or do. Right? Parents are good to their children even when they make them learn how to dress themselves, keep clean, brush their teeth, make their bed, and do their homework. All of those things can seem hard at times, and a child may not want to do them. But, the mom or dad knows that learning to do those things is all part of growing up to be a responsible adult one day.

Well, God also teaches His children through hard things He allows in our lives that help us grow up. Those tough experiences help us learn to trust Him. Tough times help us learn to give up trying to do things our own way—which may not be the best way—and start doing things God’s way—which is always the best way. Anything that draws us closer to God is good for us!

The Bible tells about 2 women named Naomi and Ruth who experienced some very tough times. Naomi is an older woman who had left her home in Bethlehem to travel with her husband and their two sons to a neighboring country called Moab. They did this to find food. The sons married girls from Moab. One of those girls was named Ruth. But, some bad things happened to the family.

Read Ruth 1:1-22.

*Name all the hurtful things Naomi and Ruth experienced.*

Naomi’s husband died. Then, Naomi’s sons died. That means Ruth’s husband died. Both women were left alone. Naomi was very sad and decided to go back home to Bethlehem.

When Naomi and Ruth left Moab and moved back to Bethlehem, they had to trust God to provide food every day. That brought them both closer to God.


*What did Naomi declare about God in verse 20 in spite of all that she had experienced?*

God had not stopped showing His kindness even in the tough times because God is good all the time. So, truth #1 is this: God is good even in the tough times.

**Truth #2: God is good in different ways for each person.**

God’s goodness may look different in my life than it does in your life. Have you or someone in your family been very sick? Or, have you moved away from home to a place far away? When that happened, you may have felt sad or scared. It’s hard to move, especially from a familiar place to some place new. Yet, because of moving, God’s goodness often gives you a new friend who is so happy to have you living near her. God was good to that person in a different way by moving you and providing a new friend.

Sometimes you can’t feel it or see it. Something looking bad for one person may be just what that person needs to get to know God in a very personal way. Or, it may be just what another person who is watching needs in order to know God in a personal way.
In the Bible story about Naomi and Ruth, Naomi and her family found food in Moab when they needed it. That was good. But, Ruth didn’t need food. She needed God. Her people in Moab didn’t know God. So, God sent Naomi to be a missionary to Ruth in Moab, to tell her about the true God so Ruth could believe in Him. God was being good to Ruth and Naomi in different ways.

Are you willing to recognize that God is good to you in a way that is different than how He is good to others?

Truth #2 is this: God is good in different ways for each person.

Truth #3: God is good in what He allows or doesn’t allow into our lives

In the story about Naomi and Ruth, Naomi’s sons both died as young men, but that doesn’t happen to everyone. Not everyone gets sick with cancer or has a car accident. Not every person moves far away from home. Throughout the Bible are many verses stating how God healed someone or protected someone in a dangerous situation. We don’t even know all the dangers God is protecting us from daily! We should thank Him all the time for doing that.

Are you ready to trust Him that what He does allow into your life is for your good?

Truth #3 is this: God blocks out more hard things in our lives than He allows to happen to us.

God is good all the time—even in the tough times, in different ways for each person, and in what He allows or doesn’t allow into our lives. Will you remember that?

TRUSTING YOUR FATHER GOD

1) Bible verse to learn:

“You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees.” (Psalm 119:68)

2) Response in prayer & praise:

Remember that God is good all the time even in the tough times in life. Thank God for the many tough things He doesn’t allow into your life.

As you talk to your Father God, are you willing to trust His goodness in the way He chooses to answer your prayer?

3) Discover God the Father:

Spend a few minutes each day reading these passages/prayers and reflecting on what you learn that reveals someone’s understanding of and trust in God. Get to know Him well—this One who loves you dearly.
Read Ruth chapters 3 & 4 to get the rest of the story.

Reflect on what you read.

Read 1 Samuel chapter 1.

Reflect on what you read.

Read 1 Samuel chapter 2.

Reflect on what you read.
THE GOD YOU CAN KNOW
7: God’s Love

"The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love." (Psalm 103:8)

THE GOD YOU CAN KNOW

- God’s SOVEREIGNTY: God is the sovereign ruler of His creation. He rules it with supreme authority and power.
- God’s OMNIPOTENCE, OMNIPRESENCE, & OMNISCIENCE (the Omnis): God’s power is more powerful than anything or anyone else in the entire universe. God’s presence is everywhere at the same time. God knows everything there is to know.
- God’s HOLINESS: God is holy. He is set apart from anything that is sinful or evil.
- God’s JUSTICE: God always does what is morally right and fair.
- God’s GRACE: God’s grace is His undeserved favor abundantly poured out on those who desperately need Him.
- God’s GOODNESS: God is good all the time—even in the tough times, in different ways for each person, and in what He allows or doesn’t allow into our lives.

ATTRIBUTE #7: LOVE

Today, our lesson is about God’s LOVE—for you and loving others through you.

How do you feel about that statement that God’s love is for you?

The Bible clearly declares that God is love. And, God’s love is described as a loyal love.

Read Psalm 103:8.

What descriptions are associated with God’s love?

The NET Bible says that God “demonstrates great loyal love.” The Message translation uses the phrase “rich in love” to describe God’s love.

What comes to mind when you think of God “abounding in love” or “rich in love”?

Is that the way you walk around thinking about God?
Read 1 John 4:7-12.

*How did God show His love to us (verse 9)?*

*What is characteristic of people who love God back? Why?*

Read Romans 5:8.

*What did God’s love lead Him to do?*

Read Ephesians 3:17-19.

*What does Paul pray for believers to be (verse 17)?*

*What does Paul want believers to grasp and know about God’s love (verses 18-19)?*

You are dearly loved. God wants you to know this with confidence.

Read Romans 8:38-39?

*What can separate us from God’s love?*

*So, how long will God’s love last for those who trust Christ?*
God’s love is perfect. His love never changes. His love doesn’t end. It is so vast that it never runs out. God doesn’t stop loving. And, nothing can ever separate you from God’s love—not even you. Isn’t that good to know?

Although we may feel love as an emotion, love is really a choice. God chose to love us, not because of anything we have done, or will do, but simply as a choice of His grace toward us. And, because God loves us, He wants us to choose to love others as He does. Love is hard to define, but we can look at what God does to see what it looks like when He loves someone. One of the best ways to see that is to look at Jesus’ life.

This is what Jesus told His disciples, “Anyone who has seen me has seen God the Father.” When we read the life of Jesus in the Bible, we see that Jesus is the walking, talking, visible picture of who God is, what He does, and how He loves. How God loves people. Jesus was saying to His followers, “Want to know how to love? Look at me. Stay focused on me.”

Jesus had been with His disciples for 3 years, loving them as He was teaching them how to love others. Jesus gave a new command to His disciples the night before He died.

Read John 13:34-35.

What is the new command?

If we obey this command, what message do we give to those watching our lives?

Jesus loved His followers very much. Because Jesus was God, every time He loved His followers, He showed them that God’s love is patient, kind, forgiving, and considers what is best for the one being loved. To learn how to love God’s way, we need to stay focused on Jesus. Jesus shows us how much God loves us. We can see God’s love clearly when we look at Jesus’ life in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and see how Jesus interacted with people. Let’s look at just one chapter in Jesus’ life to see some examples of God’s love.

Read Mark 5:1-43.

How did Jesus demonstrate love to the demon-possessed man?

How did Jesus demonstrate love to the sick woman?

How did Jesus demonstrate love to the parents of the sick girl?
How did Jesus demonstrate love to the sick girl?

By faith, you can look to Jesus and watch what He did as He lived each day on earth. To love like Jesus loved, pray for Jesus to share His heart for people with you and to help you love others like He does. God’s love is patient, kind, forgiving and considers what is best for the one being loved. You can stay focused on Jesus so that you can learn how to love others with God’s love.

"Jesus Christ gave His life for you so He could give His life to you so He could live His life through you." (Ian Thomas, The Saving Life of Christ)

TRUSTING YOUR FATHER GOD

1) Bible verse to learn:

"The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love." (Psalm 103:8,)

2) Response in prayer & praise:

Ask your Father God to help you know and believe in your heart how very much God loves you. You are dearly loved. Are you willing to trust His love for you?

Ask your Father God to help you learn how to love others as God does. Jesus will share His heart for people with you so you will want to love others as Jesus did.

3) Discover God the Father:

Spend a few minutes each day reading these prayers and reflecting on how each prayer reveals someone’s understanding of and trust in God. Get to know Him well—this One who loves you dearly.

Read John chapter 17.

Reflect on what you read.

Read Daniel chapter 9.

Reflect on what you read.
8: God's Joy

"... The joy of the Lord makes you strong." (Nehemiah 8:10 NIRV)

THE GOD YOU CAN KNOW

✓ God’s SOVEREIGNTY: God is the sovereign ruler of His creation. He rules it with supreme authority and power.

✓ God’s OMNIPOTENCE, OMNIPRESENCE, & OMNISCIENCE (the Omnis): God’s power is more powerful than anything or anyone else in the entire universe. God’s presence is everywhere at the same time. God knows everything there is to know.

✓ God’s HOLINESS: God is holy. He is set apart from anything that is sinful or evil.

✓ God’s JUSTICE: God always does what is morally right and fair.

✓ God’s GRACE: God’s grace is His undeserved favor abundantly poured out on those who desperately need Him.

✓ God’s GOODNESS: God is good all the time — even in the tough times, in different ways for each person, and in what He allows or doesn’t allow into our lives.

✓ God’s LOVE: God’s love is patient, kind, forgiving and considers what is best for the one being loved.

ATTRIBUTE #8: JOY

Today, our lesson is about God’s JOY.

When you hear the word “joy,” what comes to mind?

Most people define joy as a feeling of happiness when you are smiling and laughing a lot. And, they think that happiness comes from “good happenings.” Good happenings mean everything is going your way, turning out right. You have lots of money and are healthy and are very successful in work or school. Right?

But, what happens if things are not so good? Your family is stressed financially. You may be struggling in work or school. Your relationships are fraying. You or someone close to you is very sick. Can you really have joy then?

In the Bible, joy is a deep inner gladness regardless of circumstances going on around you. That means whether you are rich or poor, sick or healthy, successful or struggling, you can still have a feeling of gladness or pleasure deep down inside. Now, you may not feel like smiling on the outside, but you can still smile on the inside. Have you ever felt that way?

This kind of joy that I am describing is supernatural. It is part of the character of God and comes to us only from a relationship with Him through knowing Jesus Christ.

Read 1 Timothy 1:11.

How does Paul describe God?
The word “blessed” used here by Paul can also be translated “happy.” So you can read the verse as “glorious good news of the happy God.” The glorious good news is the gospel—how we can trust in Jesus and receive God’s grace and forgiveness for our sins. God is happy, you could say He is joyful, to offer this good news to people. Our God is a joyful God.

In the lesson about God’s grace (Lesson 5), you saw Jesus teaching that our Father God was like the father of the prodigal son when he returned home. Do you remember how that father acted? He was happy to see his son, filled with love, running toward him, hugging and kissing him. He called for a great celebration. That’s joy.


*Who is rejoicing and when?*


*Who is rejoicing and when?*

God has joy whenever anyone comes to Him to have his or her sins forgiven. The Bible describes lots of rejoicing in heaven at that time (verses 7, 10).

The Bible also teaches that God finds great pleasure in His creation. Do you remember what God said about His creation at the end of each of the creation days? He said it was good. After day 6, He said it was very good. God wasn’t only giving His approval but was also revealing His pleasure. The Father God has joy in what His hands have made, especially His creatures. That includes you. You are one of His creatures.

Does that make you want to smile inside to think that God finds pleasure in you?

Read Zephaniah 3:17.

*For God’s people who are trusting in Him, what is revealed about God’s joy?*

*Have you ever thought about God rejoicing over you through singing?*

*God’s joy finds great pleasure in His creation and His creatures, especially people who trust in Him.*
Joy is something that God has. But, it's also something that God gives. He is the source of joy, just as He is the source of love and grace as we have already studied. Jesus told His disciples they would have great joy coming from Him.

Read John 15:11.

*What does Jesus want for those who trust in Him?*

Jesus, who was God, had God's joy in Him. And, He promised to give His joy to His disciples so that it would be in them, also. Jesus didn't promise this to just those who knew Him when He was on earth.

Read 1 Peter 1:8.

*What does Peter write to all of us?*

*How does Peter describe the joy God gives to us?*

Though you have not seen Him, the moment you believe in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of you. And, He gives you God’s glorious, uncontainable joy.

There’s a song you may have sung that says, “The joy of the Lord is my strength.” That phrase comes from the book of Nehemiah in the Old Testament.

Read Nehemiah 8:10.

*What does God’s joy do for us?*

*If God’s joy is the ability to smile on the inside even if things are going wrong on the outside, how could having that make you strong?*

I have had a sign on my wall for over 40 years that reads, “Joy is the most infallible sign of the presence of God.” During those miserable, painful times, God’s joy inside of you assures you of His presence with you. Don’t you love that assurance?!
The joy of the Lord is God’s joy. He has it, and when He gives it to His people, it makes them strong. God’s joy in us gives us the courage to face tough times. **God’s joy finds great pleasure in His creation and His creatures, especially people who trust in Him.** His joy in us makes us strong.

*Having God’s joy in us, we should delight in the things that God delights in. We can ask ourselves: “what pleases God, what gives Him joy?” How would you answer that?*

When you have His joy, then you should take pleasure or delight in those same things. When you have the joy of the Lord, you rejoice in justice. You find pleasure in God and knowing Him, not in personal and selfish pleasures. You also find delight in studying His Word the Bible, in doing what pleases Him, and in praising God.

Some people think that when you are a Christian, you give up anything that gives you pleasure. That is not what the Bible says. It is not wrong for a Christian to have pleasure or to seek pleasure; it is only wrong to seek pleasure in the things that are selfish.

Christians filled with God’s joy should find many reasons to laugh and delight in life. We can serve God with delight. We can praise God and sing worship songs with delight. We can love our families and friends with delight.

And, our joy will be even greater in heaven when we are with Jesus and can have the delight of seeing Him with our own eyes.

**TRUSTING YOUR FATHER GOD**

1) Bible verse to learn:
   "... The joy of the Lord makes you strong." *(Nehemiah 8:10 NIRV)*

2) Response in prayer & praise:
   Praise your Father God for who He is and for being a joyful God. Thank Him for finding pleasure in His creation and in His children, including you. Ask Him to help you find pleasure in knowing Him.

   Ask your Father God to reveal to you that which brings Him delight (such as love, loyalty, justice, obedience, His Word, and praising Him) so you can delight in that also.

   Your Father God gives you freedom to enjoy life whether or not everything is going your way

3) Discover God the Father:
   Spend a few minutes each day reading these prayers and reflecting on how each prayer reveals someone’s understanding of and trust in God. Get to know Him well—this One who loves you dearly.

**Read Acts 4:1-37.**

*Reflect on what you read.*

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