**THE DOCTRINE OF GOD**

**Discipleship Lesson #2**

Of all the sciences known to man, the greatest science is theology. Theology comes from the Greek and means "the study of God." In particular, theology proper is the study of God the Father. This lesson will make you more familiar with God the Father.

**I. Who is God?** - The proper term "God" is used for the Creator of all things. In Genesis 1:1, we are told God made the heavens and the earth. In John 1:1, we see "...all things were made by him..." The word "God" in the Old Testament is a translation of the Hebrew word "Elohim." The word signifies a supreme being who is Creator, Ruler, Judge, and Sustainer of all things. He is eternal having no beginning or end. Turn in your Bible to John 1:1-3 and do the following exercises.

**THE WORD**

1. Who is the Word? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

2. When did the Word begin existence? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

3. Where did the Word exist? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

4. According to this passage is Jesus God? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**II. What names are given to God?** - As already mentioned, Elohim is the name used for God as Creator, Judge, etc. When you see the word "God" in your copy of the Old Testament, it refers to one of these characteristics. However, when you see the word "LORD" in capital letters, the word "LORD" refers to the Hebrew "Yahweh." This name reflects the covenant-keeping ability of God. Often in the first five books of the Old Testament, LORD is the name of the God of Israel. The other name in Scripture that signifies God is "Lord." This word is translated from the Hebrew "Adonai" and is the personal name of God to the Hebrews. Turn in your Bible to Isaiah 6:1-9 and do the following.

1. Who does Isaiah see, God, LORD, or Lord? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

2. To what does this name refer? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

3. Do you see the significance of how God's Name is used?

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Turn to Psalm 14:1 and answer these questions.

1. What does the fool do? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

2. Why does the fool say this in his heart? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

3. Notice what name of God is used. How does that help one understand the problem with the fool? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

The way God's name is used is vital to understanding how God works in a particular situation. There are other names given for God but that is another study.

**III. What is God like?** - There are many characteristics of God and these characteristics are called attributes. We call them attributes because we attribute them to God. We want to consider these attributes so that we may know the God we serve. The attributes of God are often divided into two groups, the non-moral and the moral. Let us examine the non-moral first because only God has the non-moral attributes.

**Non-moral Attributes**

**God is eternal** - God has no beginning or end. He is what some scholars call "the uncaused Cause." No one brought Him into being; He has always been. (Ps 90:2: Before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.) This verse plainly states the fact of God's eternal being. He is from everlasting to everlasting; without beginning or end. What does that mean to us? He will always be there for His people to enjoy. He will not die, get sick, or even go on a trip. He will be on the other side waiting for us to see Him face to face. Even though we are not eternal beings, He gives us everlasting life when we come to Him in faith. Since He is eternal, He can always provide for His people. He is an eternal source of love, joy, and peace.

**HE KNOWS**

**God is all-knowing** - This attribute of God is often referred to as "omniscience," coming from the Latin "omni" meaning all and from "science" meaning knowledge. God has all knowledge. (Ps 44:21: Would not God find this out? For He knows the secrets of the heart.) We can hide nothing from Him even in the depths of our hearts. (Job 11:11: "For He knows false men, and He sees iniquity without investigating.) There is nothing that is done or not done that God does not know about. However, there are things that are past finding out for humans that are seen in the nature of God. (Job 9:10: Who does great things, unfathomable, and wondrous works without number.) God is unfathomable or beyond our understanding. He knows the end from the beginning and vice versa. As a way of applying this truth answer the following questions.

Can God be surprised by anything we do? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Does God know what you are thinking right now? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Have you ever tried to hide something from God and did you think you got away with it? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

If we believe God knows everything, what kind of Counselor would He be when we need help? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

According to Genesis 16:13, God sees and knows everything we do. Read the following verse. (Gen 16:13: Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "You are a God who sees"; for she said, "Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?") Hagar realized that God saw her and her problem. God sees you and your problems also. Why not thank Him for seeing and knowing you right now?

**GOD IS POWERFUL**

**God is all powerful** - This attribute is often termed omnipotence or "all power." God not only has power to do works that require power but He does not have to use human means to do so. His power is not wild, uncontrollable power but is under the control of a wise, holy will. God can do all He will, but He will not do all He can. He cannot do what is not an object of power. For instance, He cannot draw a round square or build a rock larger than He can lift. Neither of these is possible in any situation. God is limited in His omnipotence by His will and His being. He will not sin, or lie, or die. It is impossible for Him to do any of these things. He would not be God if He did any of these things. The fact that He is all powerful means much to the believer in Jesus Christ. We can trust Him to do more than we can ever think. We can ask Him to do more than we can. He not only has the power to save, He has the power to keep. Jesus said in (John 17:11: "I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are.) We are kept by His great power.

**HE IS EVERYWHERE**

**God is omnipresent** - This means that God is everywhere at the same time. All of Him is everywhere at once. This is because He is spirit in essence. Jesus said in (John 4:24: "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.") It is evident from this verse that God does not have a physical body. He is not a spirit but His essence is spirit. That is what He is. No one can hide from God for He is everywhere, seeing all that we do or do not do. Like Jonah, we cannot run from the presence of God. This should bring great peace to our hearts for He said in (Heb 13:5: Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,") He is worth more than the whole world because He is a friend that sticks closer than a brother. We are to content ourselves with Him.

**GOD HAS NO LIMITS**

**God is infinite** - The boundaries that normally apply to humans do not apply to God. He has no limits or bounds. Since He is infinite, that attribute can only belong to one Being and not shared with the universe. The only limits God has are placed upon Him by His will or His being. To understand His infinite being, there are several other attributes that come under the attribute of infinity. Let us examine each of these.

**GOD IS SELF-EXISTENT**

**He is self-existent** - God does not find His ground for existence in something other than Himself. He is existent by His own power and essence. It is His being to self-exist. (Ex 3:14: God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, "I AM has sent me to you.'") The verb "hayah" in the Hebrew is a verb of being which is translated "I AM." Here the verb is used to explain God's self-existence. The idea is not that God was, or that He will be, but He exists in time and eternity in the present. Charnock says, *"If there be not a God, it is impossible there can be one, for eternity is essential to the notion of a God."* We see that God's self-existence is necessary, therefore His existence is grounded in His nature rather than His will.

**GOD DOES NOT CHANGE**

**He is immutable** - The nature, attributes, and will of God are exempt from change. All change must be either from better to worse or vice versa. God has no need to change for he is perfect in every area of His existence. The Scriptures that seem to imply changes in God are to be interpreted in the light of the whole of Scripture. God's unchanging holiness requires Him to treat the wicked different from the righteous. When the righteous become wicked, His treatment of them must change. It is like the sun shining on the wax and the clay. The sun is not partial because the wax becomes soft and the clay becomes hard. The change is not in the sun but in the objects upon which it shines. So it is with God.

**GOD IS PERFECT**

**He is perfect** - This does not simply mean that God is complete but also that he is perfect in quality. God did not create mankind so that He would have company but so that man would have fellowship with God and share God's feelings about Himself. He wanted man to glorify Him because He is perfect in every way. God does not need anything outside Himself. He loves Himself perfectly, knows Himself perfectly, and therefore what He wills is perfect. Bancroft says, "Since there is an infinite and perfect object of love as well as of knowledge and will in God's own nature, the existence of the universe is not necessary to His serenity and joy." He does not need us, but wants us. This is because of His great love and mercy.

**Moral Attributes**

We want now to consider the moral attributes of God. As was mentioned before, these attributes can be a part of man's existence but only is a lesser degree than God. We can be holy but not perfectly holy. We can love but we can love nothing perfectly. As you can see, these attributes are important to our perception of God.

**GOD IS HOLY**

**God is holy** - This attribute is one of God's most visible characteristics. In Isaiah 6, God's holiness can be seen clearly. What is it? It is moral excellence. God wills and maintains His own morality. He does this to perfection so that sin is offensive to Him, whether in Satan or humans. Sin offends God infinitely because He is an infinite being. Therefore, sin must be punished to an infinite degree to satisfy the justice of God. This does away with the idea that we could have died for our own sins. We could have died for our sins but we would be dead and not only that, holiness is required to enter Heaven. Where would we get holiness? We have none. Only Jesus could die for sins and give us His righteousness or holiness. Now, because of Jesus' sacrifice, we not only live, but also have the Spirit of God to help us live a holy life. We now have the ability and the Spirit of God to help us make use of prayer, Bible study, worship, discipleship, witnessing, and more. Turn in your Bible to Isaiah 6 and do the following.

What does the LORD reveal about Himself to Isaiah? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

The LORD is called holy three times. What do you think this tells us about God' holiness? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

If God has cleansed you as He did Isaiah, what should your response to Him be? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**GOD IS LOVE**

**God is love** - Love is an overused word in our culture today. A person can love their cat and their wife, or their truck and their parents. But what kind of love is it that is attributed to God? God's love is not to be confused with His mercy and goodness toward creatures. Rather, God's love is voluntary and deliberate. He chooses whom He loves. Of course, He is benevolent towards all that He has made. Scripture is clear on the fact that God loves His own and is involved with them in a special way. His love is without any type of outside influence. He loves without considering the possibility of being loved back. He does want love in return for that is the correct response to His love. However, we can only love Him because He first loved us. We can also love others with this type of love because God has put His love in our hearts. Those apart from Christ cannot do that. Consider John 14:21 and answer the following. (John 14:21: "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.")

Who can be said to love God? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

If we keep His commandments by following them, how does God feel about us? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

What will Jesus do if we obey His commandments? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**GOD CANNOT LIE**

**God is truth** - In a world where truth seems to be ever changing, God is the truth. His ways are true, His Word is true, and all that God does or ever will do reflects His truth. This means that God's being and God's knowledge are always in agreement with each other. He cannot lie Scripture tells us. (Titus 1:2: in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,) God cannot lie; therefore He will always be true to His nature and knowledge. When it is time to punish sin, He does so with perfect truth. When Jesus spoke to the people to whom He came, it was always true. We can trust in Him for He will always be truthful with us. In a world of no absolutes, we as followers of Christ ought to be speaking the truth about our great God. This is called witnessing and will be covered in another lesson. Let us look at the next moral attribute.

**GOD IS MERCIFUL**

**God is mercy** - Mercy leads God to seek the highest good and eternal salvation of those who are opposed to His will. God looked at the human race in eternity past and His great mercy moved Him to rescue some out of the great mass of mankind. Matthew 20:28 tells us this: (just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.") God did not purpose to save all of mankind or else everyone would be saved. Rather, He chose out of the human race those whom He wanted and passed by the rest. His mercy reaches to all who will come to Him in faith but if one will not come to Him in faith, that one will suffer the judgment of God for eternity. However, the mercy of God extends to all those who hear the call and obey.

**COURT IS IN SESSION**

**God is just** - Justice does not mean fairness. Rather it means doing the right thing even when it does not seem right. God always does the right thing even if that means sending some to hell and saving some from hell. All people will be dealt with according to the perfect standard of holiness. This is justice. No one can be holy so man must trust One who is holy to represent him. God's justice fell upon His dear Son on the cross and therefore all those who come to Him in faith are allowed to be set free from the punishment of their sins. God is just in releasing some from punishment because He is just and the Justifier (Romans 3:26). He is just in sending others to hell because they are sinners without any excuses and no one to represent them before God. This is a concept that is not often taught in churches. God is just in sending some to hell and others to Heaven. He always does the right thing.

How does this fit with your concept of God? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Does God seem to be harsh with His judgment?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Why not thank Him right now because when you stand before God, Jesus Christ will be your advocate (lawyer) and has already won your case?

You must understand that all men are under the judgment of God according to Romans 3:23. No one is exempt from God's judgment. God has selected you as one of His forever children. This concept brings humility into the life of believers. Does this not humble you? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

This study does not exhaust the character of God because that is impossible according to human standards. Rather, this study is to help you in understanding our great God. He is loving toward all who will come to Him in faith. He is wrath toward all those who will not trust His Son for their salvation. By understanding God in our limited way, we can begin to live for Him in a way that is not possible otherwise. Why do we have a desire to stop sinning? We know that God sees everything we do and He is keeping records. Christians will suffer for their sins just like sinners while on earth. Our wrong choices are based upon a corrupt human nature rather than on the attributes and character of God. When we see God as the Bible paints Him, we begin to have a proper view of ourselves. This is necessary in order to live a life that pleases God. Isaiah went through this process and God changed Him and his perspective on God and the world. This study is designed to do the same in your life. God is often considered from a wrong perspective in our culture. The Bible says what God is like and we must listen and learn from it. The prayer of this writer is that you would come to know God in a more personal way. In order to do this, you must have at your disposal good tools to work with in understanding the Bible. That is the subject of the next lesson.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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**For further reading:**

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Memory verse: