

Basics of the Christian Faith
Lesson 2
Who is God?

Who is God? The overwhelming majority of people in the United States say they believe in God, but what do they mean? Fifty years ago in the US, we would have gotten a pretty uniform answer. Today we wouldn't. Just as truth is relative in the eyes of most people, so is their concept of God. Each person feels free to decide for himself or herself who God is.

God is Great – By great we mean those things that both separate God from humanity but also those things that make him unique and worthy of worship.

He is Spirit – He does not have the limitations involved with a physical body. He is not limited to a particular geographical location.
John 4.24 - God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.

He is a person (this is the opposite of the Eastern Religions).
He has a name: Ex. 3.14 - Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"
He knows and communicates with humans (Gen. 3). He is depicted as our Father (Matt. 6).

He is Life
He is alive. Ex. 3.14 shows us that he is a living God.
Heb. 11.6 - And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.
1 Thes. 1.9 - They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.
Jer. 10.10 - But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God, the eternal King.
John 5.26 - For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself.
Gen. 1.1

Acts 17.25 - And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.

He is Infinite

In terms of space and in terms of where he is. There is nowhere he is inaccessible.

Jer. 23.23,24 - Am I only a God nearby,” declares the LORD, “and not a God far away?

Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?” declares the LORD. “Do not I fill heaven and earth?” declares the LORD.

Ps. 139.7-12 - Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

He is also infinite in that he is timeless.

Ps. 90.1-2 - Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Jude 25 - to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

He is Constant – He is unchanging, reliable.

Ps. 102.26-27 - They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment.

Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. But you remain the same,

and your years will never end.

Mal. 3.6 - I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.

God is Good

God is Holy –

In terms of being unique.

Ex. 15.11 - Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?

Hebrew word is qadosh – marked off, withdrawn from common ordinary use.

In terms of being Pure

Hab. 1.13 - Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong.

James 1.13 - When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone
He is unlike the other gods who engage in evil and selfish acts.

He is righteous – He established a holy law.

Ps. 19.7-9 - The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous.

His actions are in accord with this Law

Gen. 18.25 - Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Jer. 9.24 –

He is Faithful

1 Thes. 5.24 - The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

1 Cor. 1.9 - God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

Numbers 23.19 - God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?

He is Love

1 John 4.8, 16 - Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love...And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

The Dimensions of His Love

Benevolence

John 3.16

Deut. 7.7-8 - The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. ⁸ But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Grace

God deals with his people not on the basis of their merit or worthiness, but according to their need and his generosity.

Eph. 1.5-8 - he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

Eph. 2.7-9 - in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

Mercy

Ex. 3.7 - The LORD said, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering.

Ps. 103.13 - As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him;

Persistence

2 Peter 3.9 - the Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

God is Immanent

This describes God’s presence and activity within nature, human nature and history.

Jer. 23.24 - “Do not I fill heaven and earth?” declares the LORD.

Acts 17.27-28 - God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. ²⁸ ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’

Job 33.4 - The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

He is Transcendent – He is superior to creation.

Is. 55.8-9 - "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Ps. 113.5-6 - Who is like the LORD our God, the One who sits enthroned on high, who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth.

Discussion Questions

What is the attribute of God you appreciate the most? What is it about God that is the most difficult for you to accept?

Why do you need God? What is the difference in your life before you knew God and now that you know him?

God gives us hope in the circumstances of this world and hope for eternal life in the next. Tell the group about a personal experience of yours where you have seen one of these two aspects come to life in your own world.

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou didst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (Ps. 90:2 KJV).