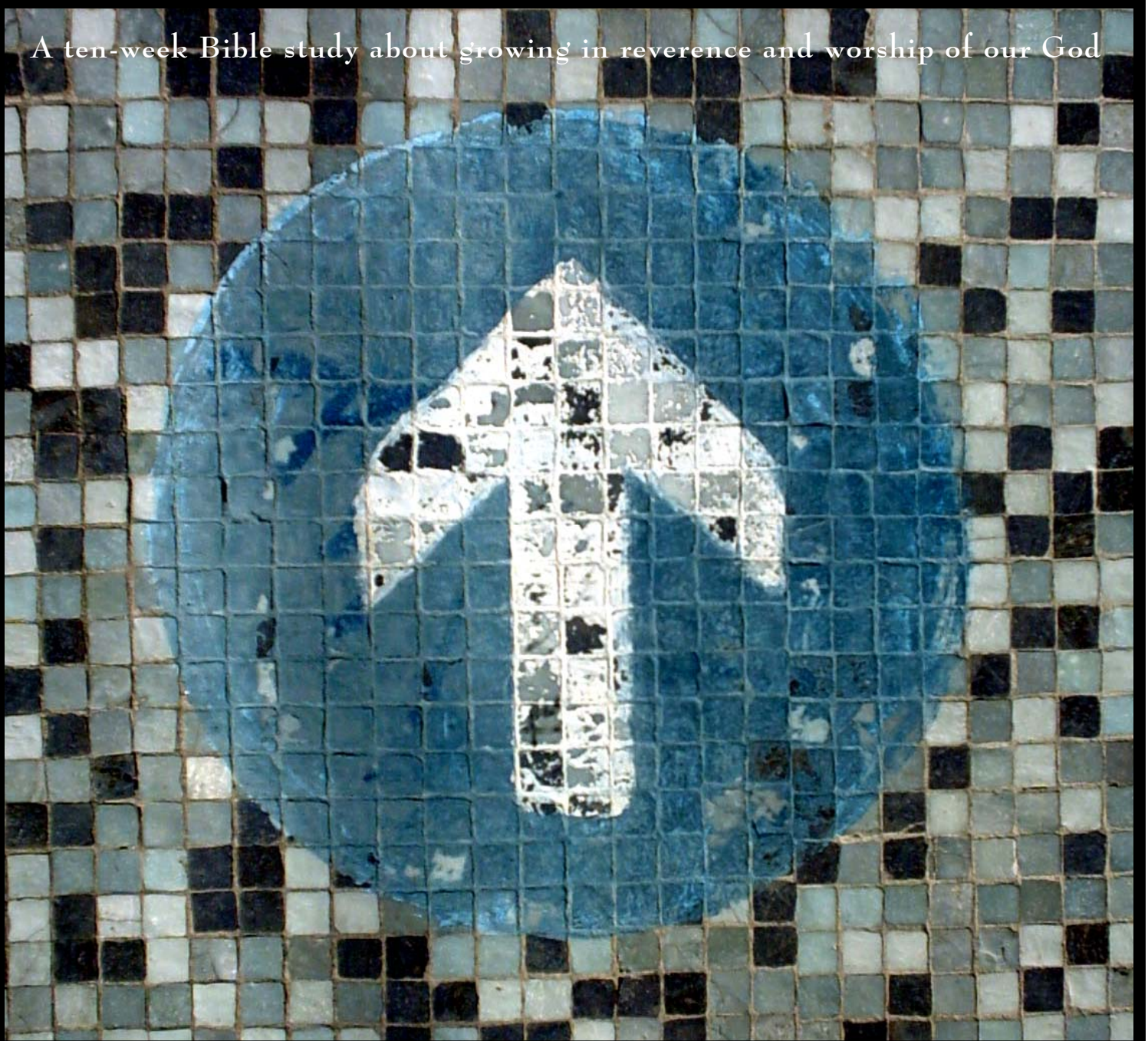


A ten-week Bible study about growing in reverence and worship of our God



THAT I MAY KNOW YOU

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THAT I MAY KNOW YOU

Week 1: Introduction

Thus says the Lord, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me..."

Jeremiah 9:23-24

What's life all about? Why am I here? What's my purpose on this earth?

These questions that have stumped the world's best philosophers for thousands of years find a simple answer in the pages of Scripture:

"That I may know You, oh God."

When asked what was the greatest command in all of Scripture, Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, replied, "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment*" (Mt 22:37-38). To love God with all of one's heart, soul, and mind is first and foremost to know Him and to pursue an intimate relationship with Him.

But not only is this our greatest command, it is also our greatest privilege. As the apostle Paul testifies, "*More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ*" (Phil 3:8). To Paul, nothing in life could compare to knowing God the Son and to growing in intimate relationship with Him.

Knowing God is life, not studying *about* God, not *servicing* God, not *witnessing* to others about God. Yes, these other things are good; they are both the natural outpouring of our relationship with God and good fuel to feed that relationship. Yet they are *nothing* compared to the priority and privilege of knowing our God.

This heartfelt conviction is the foundation for this ten-week study.

We will explore select passages from throughout the Bible that force us to come face to face with our awesome God so that we may grow to know Him more. Each week we will cover three steps:

- (1) **Observe** all that the passage teaches us about God,
- (2) **Interpret** the passage accurately through checking cross-references and overall context, and
- (3) **Apply** our study to our daily relationship with God.

The study has been designed to require approximately 2-3 hours of work at home per week, which can be done all at once, or better yet, in a few small chunks spread throughout your week. **If you find yourself short on time on a particular week, focus on the "observe" and "apply" sections.** Why these? Because (1) observations form the foundation for the rest of our study – we can go no further than our observations take us, and (2) because **knowledge without application brings judgment!** As J.I. Packer states, "if we pursue theological knowledge for its own sake, it is bound to go bad on us. It will make us proud and conceited."

Before we jump into the study, it's helpful to cover a little bit of background.

What do we mean when we say that our goal is to grow to know God more? **Simply put, we want to better understand exactly who He is so that we can fall more deeply in awe and love of Him.**

As Christians for 2000 years have attempted to know God more fully, they have often found it helpful to create lists of attributes that help to describe God in ways we humans can understand. These attributes range from character descriptions, "God is loving," to physical descriptions, "God is all-powerful."

Before we go on, it's important to realize two things about these lists.

First, these lists aren't inspired. There is no single, simple list in the Bible describing God. For this reason you're bound to find as many lists as there are theologians making lists since everyone does it a little differently. (The one below is this author's attempt; feel free to use a list from one of the books listed in the Appendix or simply make your own!)

Second, while these attributes help us describe God so that we can worship Him more fully, they do not define God. We cannot reduce God to a simple, neat list of adjectives on a page and think, "Aha! Now I fully understand Him!" Even though we can say truthfully, "God is loving," we will never fully grasp the magnitude, purity, or excellence of His love. No, our God is infinite, and though we will spend eternity in heaven getting to know Him better and better, our finite, limited minds will never, *never* fully understand how awesome our God is. But don't let this surprise you; as the famous Christian theologian Augustine said 1700 years ago, **"We are speaking of God, what marvel if thou do not comprehend? For if thou comprehended, He is not God."**

So with that word of caution, here is a basic list of the attributes of God.

Each attribute below is followed by a brief definition and key Biblical references where that attribute is found. To make the list easier to use, closely related attributes are bracketed together. You can refer back to this list every week to help you find exactly the right word to describe something you observe about God in a passage.

» Trinity

He eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God. There is one God.

(Deut 6:4, 32:39; Ps 45:6-7; Isa 43:10, 9:6; Mt 28:19; Jn 1:1,14, 10:30; 2 Cor 3:17)

» Immutable

His nature and His sovereign plan do not change.

(Mal 3:6; Heb 13:8; Jas 1:17)

» Spirit

God is a spirit, not bound by a physical body nor by physical laws of the universe.

(Jn 4:24)

» **Free**

He isn't bound by anything outside Himself. He can do anything He desires, free from any external limitation.

(Isa 40:12-28)

» **Self-existent/self-sufficient**

God does not derive from or depend on anything outside of Himself. He does not in any way need mankind or the rest of creation.

(Jn 5:26; Acts 17:24-25; 1 Tim 6:15-16)

» **Sovereign**

God is supreme ruler of all creation and nothing can occur without Him doing it or allowing it.

(1 Chron 29:11-14; Eph 1:11)

» **Transcendent**

God exists beyond creation, fully complete and satisfied in Himself.

(Jn 17:5, 24)

» **Infinite**

He is absolutely beyond measure or human comprehension.

(Ps 139:6:17, 18)

» **Eternal**

Without beginning or end, He exists outside the dimension of time and is not constrained by it. Yet He chooses to interact in time.

(Gen 21:33; Ex 3:14; Ps 90:4; 2 Pt 3:8)

» **Omniscient**

God knows all things past, present, and future. He fully knows both all things that do happen and all things that might happen (He knows all possibilities and contingencies – Mt. 11:21).

(Ps 139:1-6, 16; Isa 46:10; Mt 11:21; Heb 4:13)

» **Omnipotent**

God is all powerful. He is able to do anything He chooses, yet He never chooses to do anything which conflicts with His plan or His character.

(Ps 135:5-6; Isa 43:13; Mt 19:26; Eph 1:4-11)

» **Omnipresent/Immanent**

God is everywhere, always, completely present in His creation, sustaining it by His power, yet always distinct from it. He experiences genuine relationships within His creation.

(1 Ki 8:27; Jer 23:23-4; Ps 139:7-12)

» **Perfect**

He is the measure of all that is pure, correct, and good. All His attributes are in perfect harmony and without contradiction.

(Hab 1:13; 1 Jn 1:5)

» **Holy & Righteous**

God is absolutely separate from sin and evil, being absolutely righteous and pure in all He does.

(Deut 32:4; Isa 6:3; Rev 15:3-4)

» **Justly Wrathful**

God is absolutely righteous in satisfying His just wrath against all sin.

(Rom 1:18, 2:5)

» **Good**

God is the final standard of all that is excellent and worthy.

(Ps 25:8; Mk 10:18)

» **True**

God is the only true God and is the standard of all truth. His knowledge and words are absolutely true.

(Isa 45:18-19; Jn 17:17)

» **Faithful**

God is absolutely faithful to Himself (in all that He is by nature) and to His Word (every declaration, promise, and covenant).

(Deut 7:9; Lam 3:22-3; 2 Tim 2:13)

» **Wise**

God perfectly exercises good judgment and consistent practice.

(Rom 11:33-36; 16:27)

» **Loving**

God is eternally self-giving to others. This love is most perfectly expressed in the inter-Trinitarian love between the Father, Son, and Spirit (Jn 3:35; 14:31; 17:24), yet is also directed graciously towards His creation.

(1 Jn 4:16)

» **Merciful & Gracious**

God's compassionate love directed to those in need and/or deserving punishment.

(Ex 34:6; Mt 9:27)



THAT I MAY KNOW YOU

Week 2: Genesis 1-2

- » Pray (1) for God's insight as you study this passage and (2) that as a result of this week's study, you would really grow to love and worship God more fully.
- » Memorize **Genesis 1:27-28**.
- » Read **Genesis chapters 1-2**.



OBSERVE

Reread Genesis 1-2 & write down as many observations as you can for each of the following questions:

1. What do you observe about God in this passage? What elements of His character, attributes, and attitudes do you see? What things does God do in this passage?
 - *ex:* "in the beginning" God already existed (1:1)
 - *ex:* God is the agent who "creates" (1:1)
 - *ex:* God's Spirit was physically present over the pre-creation waters (1:2)
 - *ex:* His voice alone causes things to come into existence (1:3, 9, 11)

2. What do you observe about the relationship between God and creation?
 - *ex:* God is all powerful over His creation – He creates it out of nothing, moves it, orders it, and changes it through His will.
 - *ex:* God is physically present in His creation as He creates it

3. What do you observe about the relationship between God and mankind?
 - *ex:* mankind is a special creation of God; he is in God's image and likeness
 - *ex:* mankind is given special authority over the earth by God



INTERPRET
Part 1.
Cross-reference

To better understand what Genesis 1-2 teaches us about God, study these cross references:

» **Psalm 8**

How does this passage relate to Gen 1:27-28?

What does this passage teach us about God?

What does this passage teach us about our relationship to God?

» **Isaiah 40:28-31**

Gen 2:2-3 talks about God resting from His creative labor. Did God get tired and need to rest? For what other reason might God have “rested” on the seventh day?



INTERPRET
Part 2.
Put it together

Complete these 3 steps to get a big picture of the passage:

1. Identify three major themes in this passage.
2. In 1 sentence of your own words, describe the main point that the author (Moses) communicates in this passage. In other words, create a summary sentence for all of Gen 1-2.
3. Why are these two chapters in the Bible? In other words, why did God want us to have this historical account? Why did He include two descriptions of creation, 1:1-2:3 and 2:4-25?



APPLY
Part 1.
Meditate

Through prayer & reflection, choose 3 attributes of God that were really significant in this week's study & fill in the chart below using 1 row for each attribute:

A key attribute of God in this passage	Times in my life where this attribute has affected my attitude or actions	What would life be like as a Christian if God DID NOT have this attribute?	How should this attribute affect my worship and actions?
1.			
2.			
3.			



APPLY
Step 2.
Respond

DON'T STOP NOW!! Respond to all God has shown you this week by following these 2 application steps:

1. Once you've completed the chart above, spend at least 10 minutes responding to God in worshipful prayer and praise.
2. After filling in the above chart and praying for insight and conviction, answer this final question: how would God want me to apply what I've learned from this passage to my life this week? Get specific and concrete!



INTERPRET

Part 1.

Cross-reference

To better understand what Genesis 3 & 6:9-9:17 teaches us about God, study these cross references:

» **Romans 5:12-21**

How does this passage relate to Gen 3?

It often strikes people as unfair and downright mean that God would allow us to suffer the consequences of Adam's failure. How does Rom 5:12-21 answer that charge? What does it say about God's character?

» **Genesis 6:6 is a difficult verse!**

What does it mean that God "was sorry that He had made man?" Is God ever surprised by how things turn out (look up Isa 46:10 and Ps 139:1-6, 16)? Does He experience emotional pain and remorse like we do (look up Ps 78:40-41; Hos 11:8)? What does this teach you about God?



INTERPRET

Part 2.

Put it together

Complete these 2 steps to get a big picture of the passage:

1. Identify three major themes in chapters 3-9.
2. Why are these chapters in the Bible? In other words, why did God want us to have this historical account? How is it beneficial to us?



APPLY
Part 1.
Meditate

Through prayer & reflection, choose 3 attributes of God that were really significant in this week's study & fill in the chart below using 1 row for each attribute:

A key attribute of God in this passage	Times in my life where this attribute has affected my attitude or actions	What would life be like as a Christian if God DID NOT have this attribute?	How should this attribute affect my worship and actions?
1.			
2.			
3.			



APPLY
Step 2.
Respond

DON'T STOP NOW!! Respond to all God has shown you this week by following these 2 application steps:

1. Once you've completed the chart above, spend at least 10 minutes responding to God in worshipful prayer and praise.
2. After filling in the above chart and praying for insight and conviction, answer this final question: how would God want me to apply what I've learned from this passage to my life this week? Get specific and concrete!



INTERPRET
Part 1.
Cross-reference

To better understand what Exodus 19:1-20:21 & 24:1-18 teaches us about God, study these cross references:

» **Deuteronomy 4:25-40**

How does this passage relate to Ex 19-24?

According to this passage, why did God miraculously deliver Israel from Egypt (2 reasons)? If the Israelites faithfully obeyed the Mosaic Law (given in Ex 20-24) what would be the result according to this passage? What would be the result of disobedience?

» **Isaiah 6:1-7**

Notice that Isaiah responds to God's physical presence in the same way that the Israelites do. What is the relationship between the Mosaic Law (given in Ex 20-24) and God's holiness? In your own words, what does it mean that God is "holy"? How does God's holiness affect His relationship with mankind? How should it affect our attitude towards Him?



INTERPRET
Part 2.
Put it together

Complete these 2 steps to get a big picture of the passage:

1. Identify three major themes running through Exodus 19-24.
2. Why are these chapters in the Bible? In other words, why did God want us to have this historical account? How is it a benefit to us?



APPLY
Part 1.
Meditate

Through prayer & reflection, choose 3 attributes of God that were really significant in this week's study & fill in the chart below using 1 row for each attribute:

A key attribute of God in this passage	Times in my life where this attribute has affected my attitude or actions	What would life be like as a Christian if God DID NOT have this attribute?	How should this attribute affect my worship and actions?
1.			
2.			
3.			



APPLY
Step 2.
Respond

DON'T STOP NOW!! Respond to all God has shown you this week by following these 2 application steps:

1. Once you've completed the chart above, spend at least 10 minutes responding to God in worshipful prayer and praise.
2. After filling in the above chart and praying for insight and conviction, answer this final question: how would God want me to apply what I've learned from this passage to my life this week? Get specific and concrete!



INTERPRET
Part 1.
Cross-reference

To better understand what Psalm 139 teaches us about God, study these cross references:

» **Isaiah 40:12-28 & Romans 11:33-36**

The Psalmist (David) freely admits that he will never be able to fully understand God, or even come close to it (vs. 6, 17, & 18). Is this true? Is this damaging to our faith or is this actually a good thing? How should we respond to God's incomprehensibility?

» **Job 10:8-10 and Ecclesiastes 11:5**

Did God really make *me* or did He simply set things in motion with Adam and Eve and leave the rest to genetics? Based on your answer, how should we treat the disabled? How should this affect your view of your own body? Of your own self-worth?



INTERPRET
Part 2.
Put it together

Complete these 3 steps to get a big picture of the passage:

1. How do verses 19-24 fit in with the rest of Ps 139? Why did the author (David) include these verses?
2. In one sentence of your own words, describe the main point that David communicates in this passage. In other words, create a summary sentence for all of Ps 139.
3. Why is this Psalm in the Bible? How is it beneficial to us?



APPLY
Part 1.
Meditate

Through prayer & reflection, choose 3 attributes of God that were really significant in this week's study & fill in the chart below using 1 row for each attribute:

A key attribute of God in this passage	Times in my life where this attribute has affected my attitude or actions	What would life be like as a Christian if God DID NOT have this attribute?	How should this attribute affect my worship and actions?
1.			
2.			
3.			



APPLY
Step 2.
Respond

DON'T STOP NOW!! Respond to all God has shown you this week by following these 2 application steps:

1. Once you've completed the chart above, spend at least 10 minutes responding to God in worshipful prayer and praise.
2. After filling in the above chart and praying for insight and conviction, answer this final question: how would God want me to apply what I've learned from this passage to my life this week? Get specific and concrete!



INTERPRET
Part 1.
Cross-reference

To better understand what Jeremiah 2-4 teaches us about God, study these cross references:

» **Hosea 11**

How does this passage relate to Jeremiah 2-4? What similar themes do you notice?

Does God experience emotions (defend your answer from Jer 2-4 and Hos 11)?

If you answered “yes” above, then in some sense, God changes, for at some moments He experiences heartfelt love, at other moments grief (Gen 6:6; Ps 78:40), at other moments jealousy (Ex 20:5), etc. How do you reconcile this reality with these passages that say that God does not change – Mal 3:6, Jas 1:17, and Heb 13:8? In what ways does He change and in what ways does He not? How does your answer practically affect your relationship with Him?

» **John 17:22-26 and Acts 17:22-25**

Jeremiah 2-4 clearly declares that God deeply loves His people, as strongly as a husband loves a wife or a father loves a son. What motivates this divine love? Is it because God would be lonely without us? Is it because He needs us? If not, what is it that motivates this love?



INTERPRET
Part 2.
Put it together

Complete these 2 steps to get a big picture of the passage:

1. Identify three major themes in Jeremiah 2-4.
2. Why is this passage in the Bible? In other words, why did God want us to have this prophetic account? How is it beneficial to us?



APPLY
Part 1.
Meditate

Through prayer & reflection, choose 3 attributes of God that were really significant in this week's study & fill in the chart below using 1 row for each attribute:

A key attribute of God in this passage	Times in my life where this attribute has affected my attitude or actions	What would life be like as a Christian if God DID NOT have this attribute?	How should this attribute affect my worship and actions?
1.			
2.			
3.			



APPLY
Step 2.
Respond

DON'T STOP NOW!! Respond to all God has shown you this week by following these 2 application steps:

1. Once you've completed the chart above, spend at least 10 minutes responding to God in worshipful prayer and praise.
2. After filling in the above chart and praying for insight and conviction, answer this final question: how would God want me to apply what I've learned from this passage to my life this week? Get specific and concrete!



THAT I MAY KNOW YOU

Week 7: Luke 1-2

- » Pray (1) for God's insight as you study this passage and (2) that as a result of this week's study, you would really grow to love and worship God more fully.
- » Memorize **Luke 1:49-52**.
- » Read **Luke 1:26-2:52**.



OBSERVE

Reread Luke 1:26-2:52 & write down as many observations as you can for the following questions:

1. What do you observe about God in this passage? What elements of His character, attributes, and attitudes do you see? What things does God do in this passage?

2. What do you observe about the relationship between God and mankind?



INTERPRET
Part 1.
Cross-reference

To better understand what Luke 1:26-2:52 teaches us about God, study these cross references:

» **Isaiah 9:1-7, 42:1-9, 53:1-12**

How do these passages relate to Luke 1-2?

What do you learn about God from these passages? What do you learn about who Jesus is? According to these passages, why would God send Jesus to earth (multiple reasons)?

» **John 1:1-18**

How does this passage relate to Luke 1-2?

Using John 1 as your guide, answer these questions: (1) Who is Jesus? (2) How is He related to God the Father? (3) How is He related to us? What else do you learn about God's character and attributes from John 1? (optional: see Appendix pgs 30-32 for more on Trinity & Christology)



INTERPRET
Part 2.
Put it together

Complete these three steps to get a big picture of the passage:

1. Identify three major themes running through Luke 1-2.
2. In 1 sentence of your own words, describe the main point that Luke communicates in this passage. In other words, create a summary sentence for all of Luke 1-2.
3. Why are these chapters in the Bible? In other words, why did God want us to have this historical account? How is it beneficial to us?



APPLY
Part 1.
Meditate

Through prayer & reflection, choose 3 attributes of God that were really significant in this week's study & fill in the chart below using 1 row for each attribute:

A key attribute of God in this passage	Times in my life where this attribute has affected my attitude or actions	What would life be like as a Christian if God DID NOT have this attribute?	How should this attribute affect my worship and actions?
1.			
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APPLY
Step 2.
Respond

DON'T STOP NOW!! Respond to all God has shown you this week by following these 2 application steps:

1. Once you've completed the chart above, spend at least 10 minutes responding to God in worshipful prayer and praise.
2. After filling in the above chart and praying for insight and conviction, answer this final question: how would God want me to apply what I've learned from this passage to my life this week? Get specific and concrete!



INTERPRET
Part 1.
Cross-reference

To better understand what John 10:1-11:46 teaches us about God, study these cross references:

» **Psalm 23; Isaiah 40:9-11; Ezekiel 34:11-22**

Using the above cross references and John 10, describe the significance of God being our “good Shepherd.” What does this shepherd/sheep metaphor teach us about God’s character, attributes, and actions? What does it teach us about ourselves?

» **Ephesians 1**

What similar themes do you see both in this passage and in John 10-11?

What does this passage teach us about God? What do you learn about His character, attributes, and actions?

What does it mean that God “predestined us”? On what basis did He choose us (what motivated Him to choose each of us in particular – see also Eph 2:1-9 & Titus 3:3-7)? What is the practical significance of this in your own life (see also Rom 8:28-39)? Does it matter?



INTERPRET
Part 2.
Put it together

Complete these 2 steps to get a big picture of the passage:

1. Identify three major themes running through John 10-11.

2. Why are these chapters in the Bible? In other words, why did God want us to have this historical account? How is it beneficial to us?



APPLY
Part 1.
Meditate

Through prayer & reflection, choose 3 attributes of God that were really significant in this week's study & fill in the chart below using 1 row for each attribute:

A key attribute of God in this passage	Times in my life where this attribute has affected my attitude or actions	What would life be like as a Christian if God DID NOT have this attribute?	How should this attribute affect my worship and actions?
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APPLY
Step 2.
Respond

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1. Once you've completed the chart above, spend at least 10 minutes responding to God in worshipful prayer and praise.
2. After filling in the above chart and praying for insight and conviction, answer this final question: how would God want me to apply what I've learned from this passage to my life this week? Get specific and concrete!



INTERPRET
Part 1.
Cross-reference

To better understand what Revelation teaches us about God, study these cross references:

» **Exodus 33:18-23**

What does this passage teach us about God?

If God were to appear in all His glory right here, right now, not masking Himself from us but showing us exactly who He is, what would happen (see also Rev 20:11)? How should this reality practically affect our worship of God?

» **Zephaniah 3:1-11; Romans 1:18-25, 2:1-5**

What similar themes do you notice between these passages and the chapters in Revelation?

How would you define God's "wrath"? Why must God pour out His wrath on anyone; why can't He simply let everyone off the hook? Do people come under God's wrath simply because He did not predestine them to salvation or is there a different reason?



INTERPRET
Part 2.
Put it together

Complete these 2 steps to get a big picture of the passage:

1. Identify three major themes running through these chapters in Revelation.

2. Why are these chapters in the Bible? In other words, why did God want us to have this prophesy? How is it a benefit to us?



APPLY
Part 1.
Meditate

Through prayer & reflection, choose 3 attributes of God that were really significant in this week's study & fill in the chart below using 1 row for each attribute:

A key attribute of God in this passage	Times in my life where this attribute has affected my attitude or actions	What would life be like as a Christian if God DID NOT have this attribute?	How should this attribute affect my worship and actions?
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APPLY
Step 2.
Respond

DON'T STOP NOW!! Respond to all God has shown you this week by following these 2 application steps:

1. Once you've completed the chart above, spend at least 10 minutes responding to God in worshipful prayer and praise.
2. After filling in the above chart and praying for insight and conviction, answer this final question: how would God want me to apply what I've learned from this passage to my life this week? Get specific and concrete!

APPENDIX

Good Books to Look at

Enns, P. P. The Moody Handbook of Theology. Chicago: Moody Press, 1997.

Erickson, M. J. Christian Theology. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001.

Packer, J. I. Knowing God. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973.

Phillips, J.B. Your God is Too Small. London: Epworth, 1952.

Ryrie, C. C. A Survey of Bible Doctrine. Chicago: Moody Press, 1995.

Tozer, A.W. The Knowledge of the Holy. New York: Harper & Row, 1961.

Author's Personal Theology Proper

The following was written by Blake Jennings in Spring 2002 as a brief, personal summary of his Trinitarian beliefs. It is offered as (1) background so that you might clearly know the theological beliefs of this study's author, and (2) a guide to help you write a similar creed-like statement as a summary of your own study.

“I believe in the simple, self-sufficient, immutable, infinite, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, holy, righteous, loving, and relational God who eternally exists as three real persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that each person is fully God, and that there is one God. While each person of this Trinity is a distinct center of consciousness, all three are joined by their commonly shared divine nature and united together forever in perfect, perichoretic fellowship. I believe in God the Father, the source of all things, the Holy Judge, Sovereign Ruler, and Compassionate Reconciler to whom belongs all glory and honor. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's uncreated Son, generated by the Father in eternity past and in His incarnation joined inseparably to a human nature without dilution, mixture, or confusion of either the divine or human natures such that He is forever fully God and fully man. I believe in the uncreated Holy Spirit who proceeded forth from the Father and Son in eternity past and who today regenerates and indwells all believers.”

Trinitarianism – What do we Mean by ‘Trinity’?

Uh, oh! Here’s that concept we’ve never been able to understand yet know we must somehow believe: the Trinity. I will admit, probably no other fundamental doctrine of Christianity is so incomprehensible or difficult to communicate. Yet if we fail to understand God as Trinity (or at least try to), we have little hope for relating to Him properly. As Wayne Grudem simply states, the doctrine of the Trinity affirms that:

**God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
and each person is fully God
and there is one God**

Yes, I realize that this definition doesn’t make the concept any easier to grasp. How can 1 be 3 and 3 be 1? As tough as it is to grasp, the Bible presents this reality clearly in numerous passages. Even though the word “Trinity” never appears in the Bible, the concept of God as Trinity is:

1. God is One

Deuteronomy 6:4, 32:39
Isaiah 43:10
James 2:19

2. The Father, Son, and Spirit are each God

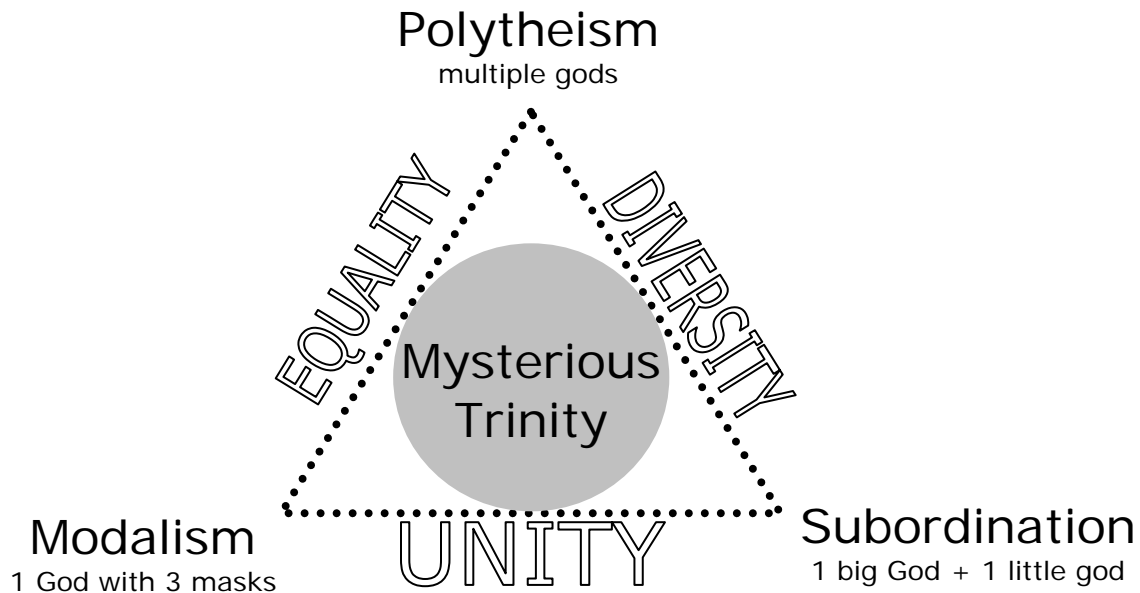
Psalm 45:6-7
Isaiah 9:6
Mathew 28:19
John 1:1,14, 10:30
2 Corinthians 3:17-18
Philippians 2:5-11

In the end, we should actually expect our infinite God to be incomprehensible in many respects to us, His finite creation. God knows this. So instead of commanding us to understand Him, He calls us to reach out in adoration and humbly accept His incomprehensibility. So even though we will always struggle to understand this concept, we can in peace believe the Biblical witness and accept that it as true.

Over the last couple thousand years, many people have sought in error to simplify the mystery of the Trinity by teaching a heretical view of God. These errors can generally be classified in 3 groups:

1. **Polytheism** – viewing the Biblical God as 3 separate gods, “father,” “son,” and “spirit.” They are all separate, independent, free ‘gods.’ This heresy denies the unity of God, that He is One Divine Being.
2. **Modalism** – viewing the Biblical God as a single Person who plays different roles in history at different times. He is sometimes the Father, ruling over all, sometimes the Son, especially during the incarnation, and sometimes the Spirit, indwelling believers. This heresy denies the diversity of the Triune God, that He is three distinct Persons.
3. **Subordination** – viewing the Biblical God = God the Father. Jesus Christ is believed to be a lesser god and the Holy Spirit is believed to be simply the impersonal “spirit” of the Father.

Even though we can't fully explain or even understand the Trinity, we can draw protective boundaries around what the Bible says about our Triune God. These boundaries are Equality, Diversity, and Unity. As Christians, we *must* affirm all three. And in so doing, we exclude all the heresies mentioned above, as illustrated below.



Christology – Who is Jesus?

Just like the Trinity, the incarnation of Jesus is another mystery that our finite human minds will never fully grasp. What does it mean that Jesus was both “fully God” and “fully man”? How can you be 100% of two different things? Again, while the Bible doesn't give us an easy answer, it does affirm the truth that, indeed, Jesus is both fully God and fully man:

Jesus is fully God & fully man – Phil 2:5-11; Col 2:9

Jesus is fully God

1. Self-revelations of Deity – John 8:58, 10:30; Mt 28:18-20
 - a. Notice that the original audience understood exactly what He was saying, to them He was blaspheming
 - b. Why was He not more clear? Because He would have been immediately killed
2. Other Passages – Col 1:13-19, 2:9; Phil 2:5-11; Heb 1:1-3; John 1:1-18, 20:28; Acts 20:28; Rom 9:5; Tit 1:3-4; 2 Pe 1:1
3. Indirect Evidence
 - a. Divine Attributes
 - i. Preexistence (Isa 9:6; Jn 17:5,24)
 - ii. Omnipresence (Mt 28:20)
 - iii. Immutability (Heb 13:8)
 - b. Divine Actions

- i. Pardon of sin (Mt 9:2; Lk 7:48; Jn 3:18, 8:11)
- ii. Creator & Sustainer of the universe (Col 1:16-17)
- iii. Lordship over the Spirit (Mt 3:11-16; Jn 1:33, 15:26, 20:22)
- iv. Reception of Worship (Mt 14:33, 21:15-16, 28:9,17)

Jesus is fully man

- 1. He had a human body (He shared fully in the material part of a human being) – Mt 1:18; Lk 2:52; Jn 8:40; Gal 4:4; Heb 2:14-18
- 2. He had a human spirit (He shared fully in the immaterial part of a human being) – Mt 26:38; Lk 23:46
- 3. He had the characteristics of a human being – hungry (Mt 4:2), thirsty (Jn 19:28), tired (Jn 4:6), wept (Jn 11:35); was tested (Heb 4:15)

Just as heresies have threatened our Trinitarian beliefs over the last 2000 years, so they have threatened our beliefs about Jesus. The chart below works just like the Trinity chart above. While we can't fully explain the mystery of Christ's incarnation, we can define four Biblical boundaries that we absolutely *must* believe: (1) Christ was fully God, (2) Christ was fully human, (3) the divinity and humanity of Christ remain unconfused – one did not dilute or reduce the other, and (4) Christ is one united person – He doesn't suffer from split personality syndrome! Some of the heresies that have developed about Christ in the last 2000 years are listed outside the boundary that they violate.

