

THRIVE

High School Small Group Guide

Session 4

- In our last series, we talked about the different types of freedom we discover when we follow Jesus. This is the first session of our series called “The Attributes of God.” This study aims at understanding the qualities that make up God and teaches us ways that we are like Christ but also different.
- In this session, we are going to lay the foundation for this series. We are going to talk about Who God is, what he is not, and why it's important to study the attributes of God. The goal of studying Christ is so that we grow in an intimate relationship with him.
- There is a huge difference between *knowing of* someone vs. truly *knowing* them. A person can “KNOW” all the Bible stories, how many books are in the Old and New Testament, or what Jesus did on his 42nd day of ministry, but do you KNOW him? Do you have a relationship with him? By the end of this study, I hope that you walk away actually knowing Christ better today than yesterday.

“Why Study the Attributes of God?”

1. How we view God impacts how we view everything!
2. The attributes of God reveal three things: God’s character, our sin, and the glorious gospel! (John 3:16)
3. Having a right understanding of who God is gives our faith a firm foundation to rest upon.
4. Understanding who He is puts every aspect of our life and the world into perspective.

5. When we struggle to understand all of life's questions, we can always resort back to the attributes of God to help us understand.
- What words or phrases come to mind when you think about God and your relationship with him right now? Take a moment to think about why you feel this way and what in your life has made you have this picture of God.
 - Now, we are going to look at some common misconceptions of what people think about God.

What God is Not:

- God is NOT, a “universal police officer” who does not want anyone to have any fun. This is not who God is. God is NOT, a Santa Claus or a genie who grants all of our wishes.

The Attributes of God (What God is)

<p>01 Eternal God has no beginning and no end. He always was, always is, and always will be. HAB 1:12, REV. 1:8, IS. 41:4</p>	<p>02 Faithful God is loyally devoted to his plan and purpose. God will never fail us. 2 TIM. 2:13, DEUT. 7:9, HEB. 10:23</p>	<p>03 Good God is pure, there is no defilement in him. He is unable to sin, and all he does is good. GEN 1:31, PS. 34:8, PS. 107:1</p>
<p>04 Gracious God is kind, giving us gifts and benefits we do not deserve. 2 Kings 13:23, PS. 145:8, IS. 30:18</p>	<p>05 Holy God is pure. He is sacred and set-apart from the rest of humanity. REV. 4:8, LEV. 19:2, HAB. 1:13</p>	<p>06 Incomprehensible and Transcendent God is high above and beyond human understanding. He cannot be fully known. PS. 145:3, IS. 55:8-9, ROM. 11:33-36</p>
<p>07 Unchanging God does not change. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. 1 SAM. 15:29, ROM. 11:29, JAMES. 1:17</p>	<p>08 Infinite God is limitless. He exhibits all of his attributes perfectly and boundlessly. ROM. 11:33-36, IS. 40:28, PS. 147:5</p>	<p>09 Jealous God is desirous of receiving the praise and affection he rightly deserves. EX. 20:5, DEUT. 4:23-24, JOSH. 24:19</p>
<p>10 Just God governs in perfect justice. In Him, there is no wrongdoing or dishonesty. IS. 61:8, DEUT. 32:4, PS. 146:7-9</p>	<p>11 Loving God is eternally, and a steadfastly, loving and affectionate God. JN. 3:16, EPH. 2:4-5, 1 JN. 4:16</p>	<p>12 Merciful God is compassionate, withholding from us the wrath that we deserve. Titus. 3:5, PS. 25:10, LAM. 3:22-23</p>

13

Omnipotent

God is all powerful. His strength is unlimited. MAT. 19:26, JOB 42:1-2, JER. 32:27

14

Omnipresent

God is everywhere, His presence is near at all times. MAT. 19:26, Job. 42:1-2, JER. 32:27

15

Omniscient

God is all knowing; there is nothing unknown to Him. PS. 147:4, 1 JN. 3:20, HEB. 4:13

16

Patient

God gives ample opportunity for people to turn to Him. ROM 2:4, 2 PET. 3:9, PS. 86:15.

17

Self-existent

God was not created but exists by his power alone. PS. 90:1-2, JN 1:4, JN 5:26

18

Self-Sufficient

God has no needs and depends on nothing, but everything depends on God. IS. 40:28-31, ACTS 17:24-25, PHIL. 4:19

19

Sovereign

God governs over all things; He is in complete control. COL. 1:17, PS. 24:1-2, 1 CHRON. 29:11-12

20

Truthful

God is our discernment of what is fact. By Him we are able to discern true and false. JN. 3:33, ROM. 1:25, JN. 14:6

21

Wise

God is infinitely knowledgeable and is judicious with His knowledge.

22

Wrathful

God stands in opposition to all that is evil. He enacts judgement according to his holiness, righteousness, and justice. PS. 69:24, JN. 3:36, ROM. 1:18

Reflect and Discuss:

1. What attributes of God bring you the most comfort?
2. What attributes of God do you find to be most difficult to understand? Look up the definitions of words you don't know.

God is also...

- The creator and source of all things. The world continues only by his sustaining hand.
- Three people in one. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Every attribute of God is true of each person of the Trinity.

- Loving and has a love that is steadfast and sure. (Lamentations 3:22-23)
- Faithful, even when his children chase after the pleasures of this world. (2 Timothy 2:13)
- Draws near and longs to be with us. (Exodus 29:45, Ezekiel 37:27)
- The Incarnation (John 1:14) Jesus is the word made flesh, who came and dwelt among us.

Read Genesis 1:27: God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Reflect and Discuss:

1. What can we learn about God from this verse?

Read Jeremiah 10:6: No one is like you, Lord, you are great, great and mighty is your name.

Reflect and Discuss: What can we learn about God from this verse?

Read Hebrews 1:1-3: In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways to our ancestors through the prophets; in these last days, he spoke to us through a son, whom he made heir of all things and through whom he created the universe, who is the refulgence of his glory, the very imprint of his being, and who sustains all things by his mighty word. When he had accomplished purification from sins, he took his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Reflect and Discuss:

1. What can we learn about God from this passage? Which characteristics from the list do you think these verses are trying to show?
2. Look over the passage again... what words or phrases stick out to you as you read these verses and why?

3. Is there anything confusing?
4. What does this passage tell us about God's relationship to Jesus?

What does it mean to know God?

- There is a difference between knowing about God vs. having an intimate relationship with him.
- Our goal of this study is to get passed the cliches when it comes to talking about who God is and instead, we want to know God: we want to truly, deeply, and intimately know him.
- Knowing and glorifying God is what we were created for.
- When we truly know God, it is shown in our obedience to him.
- Knowing God also teaches us to interpret our lives and the world around us in light of what we know to be true about God.
- Nothing in this life is more important than *knowing* and *being known* by God.

Reflect and Discuss:

1. What do you think the difference is between *knowing about* God and *knowing* God?
2. It's important to know God's heart to grow closer to Him. What do you think it means to "know God's heart"?
3. How do you think having a close relationship with God and a deep understanding of who God is impacts our worldview and how we go about life?
4. Does your Christian worldview and your relationship with God impact the decisions you make? Why or why not?
 - Now we are going to talk about the two different groups of attributes: communicable and incommunicable.

- God's communicable attributes are attributes that humans can also possess, though not in the same way that God does. Incommunicable attributes are those that humans CANNOT possess. These are qualities that describe the Trinity alone.
- Incommunicable attributes include: eternal, infinite, immutable, self-existent, self-sufficient, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, incomprehensible and transcendent, and sovereign
- Communicable attributes include: holy, loving, good, truthful, just, wrathful, merciful, gracious, jealous, patient, wise, and faithful

Reflect and Discuss:

1. Do any of the communicable attributes surprise or confuse you?

(Sometimes we can be confused by "wrathful" and "jealous." We'll go into these in detail in a future session. When God is "jealous" or "wrathful," He is still holy, or set apart from sin. Think about it this way. How do you feel when somebody mistreats somebody else or when someone abuses the power given to them? It will probably make you angry. Anger itself is not a sin. However, if we don't know how to manage our anger, it may cause us to sin. How we respond to our anger is what matters. Now for jealous... God loves us SO MUCH that he may get sad, or "jealous," if we completely ignore Him and give all our time and energy to worldly things instead of spending time with Him.)

2. Look at the list of communicable attributes. Which ones do you think you need the most work on?

- One communicable attribute that Christians talk about a lot is grace. Watch this video that explores the true meaning of grace.

Watch "Grace - Character of God Series": www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABPVVw_aw44

Reflect and Discuss:

1. When did God or somebody show you grace?
2. When have you shown grace?
3. How can you grow in grace?
 - When reading the following verses, think about what they tell us about God's character and also our relationship with God.

Read Jeremiah 9:23-24 (NIV): This is what the Lord says: 'Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches, but let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,' declares the Lord.

Read Psalm 86:5-12: Lord, you are good and forgiving, most merciful to all who call on you. Lord, hear my prayer; listen to my cry for help. On the day of my distress I call to you, for you will answer me. None among the gods can equal you, O Lord; nor can their deeds compare to yours. All the nations you have made shall come to bow before you, Lord, and give honor to your name. For you are great and do wondrous deeds; and you alone are God. Teach me, Lord, your way that I may walk in your truth, single-hearted and revering your name. I will praise you with all my heart, glorify your name forever, Lord my God.

“What comes into our mind when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” A.W. Tozer

Listen to the song "Known" by Tauren Wells. Pay close attention to the lyrics. What do they tell us about God and our relationship with Him?

"Known": www.youtube.com/watch?v=gbQ6Lfh5L14

Session Challenges

- Theme verse: **Hebrews 4:16** - "So let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help."

Read through the "How to Memorize Scripture" handout. It contains many ideas to help you memorize Scripture. We encourage you to try out one of the techniques this week.

- Session Challenge: Until the next session, we're all going to work on growing in grace... that means being gracious. When somebody asks you for help with something, (maybe a younger sibling asks for help with homework, your mom asks you to help with the dishes, etc.) strive to say yes. When you don't want to help, say a quick prayer to the Holy Spirit asking Him to work through you. Let Jesus bless others through you.
- Showing grace to people means showing kindness to them even if they didn't do anything to deserve it. Maybe there's a kid at school who doesn't have any friends. Invite them to sit at your lunch table. Maybe your neighbor is very sick. Offer to bring them a meal. There are so many ways we can bless others and complete random acts of kindness.
- Let's not only strive to grow in grace this month but also choose one random act of kindness we will do before the next session. Write down what you will do before the next session and share it with your group when you get back.

End in prayer.