



In the beginning God.... Leaders Guide Week 3

(Times are approximate) – start time: _____

Welcome

- Be sure to identify any new people if necessary.
- Thank people for doing the study lesson, tell how it enriches everyone's understanding of the study.

(+2 min)

Opening prayer

(+1 min)

Opening Comments – (note, this opening is a bit long so you might want time marks down margin)

- When many people read the Old Testament they get the impression that God is a God of wrath and judgment, but in the New Testament they find a God of love.
- Why is there this difference in Scripture?
- This question has bothered Christians for a number of years.
- The reality is that there is no difference between the images of God presented in the Old and New Testaments.
- John points this truth out when he states that “No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made Him known. (Jn. 1:18)”
- What John is pointing out is that what one sees in Jesus is precisely the character of the Father, God of the Old Testament.
- The Father is no more judging than Jesus.
- All New Testament writers see a similar continuity between the Old Testament God and the God they experience through Jesus.
- Briefly three points that will help with this statement.
- 1) there is love in the Old Testament; 2) there is judgment in the New Testament; 3) the main difference is a difference between judgment within history (OT) and judgment at the end of history (NT).
- 1) We have seen in Genesis that God does not present Himself as first and foremost a God of judgment but of love for His creation, and especially man and woman.
- Scriptures shows that throughout the Old Testament God continually tells people that He chose Israel out of love.
- God demonstrated His love in our study of Jonah in that He did not bring judgment to the people of Nineveh but spared them.
- 2) There is judgment in the New Testament.
- A word count on *judge* or *judgment* in the New Testament in the NIV comes up with 108 verses.
- Even more significant is the fact the Jesus is the one who warns most about judgment.
- The New Testament preaches grace and love, but grace and love can be rejected.
- The New Testament also preaches final judgment (end of history).
- 3) Thirdly, there is a difference between the Testaments in their portrayal of judgment.
- In the Old Testament judgment generally happens within history.
- By the New Testament period God has revealed a lot more about the future life.

- Therefore the judgments spoken of there are the judgments related to the end of history and the resurrection of the dead: eternal life or being thrown into hell, seeing all that one worked for being burned up or receiving a crown of life.
- All of this takes place beyond history.
- So we have the very same God in both the Old and New Testaments.
- A loving, caring, and holy God.
- Because of His holiness He still has a wrath towards sin. But by His love He send His Son so we sinners have the opportunity to be made pure and holy in His sight by accepting Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Jesus said *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)"*
- So let's begin this study of the Person of God.

(+5 min)

Discussion of the Study Lesson – (~49 min) – Weekly theme: God of Creation (The Person of God)

Day 1: Overview – Read Genesis 1:3-25

Our study lesson last week focused on "what" God did and the methods used. This week we are focusing on the person of God.

1. How many times are the following phrases used in these verses?

- "God said..." –
- "God saw..." –
- "God called..." –
- "God made..." –
- "God created..." –

- Here are the numbers: God said = 9; God saw = 7; God called = 3; God made = 3; God created = 2.

(+2 min)

2. The phrases in the previous question are used by God multiple times through Scripture. What do you learn about the person of God from these passages? (note: this is long, time marks in the margin will help)

a) "God said..." see Exodus 3:12; 1 Kings 3:5-15; Hebrews 5:5-6; 7:18-20

- **Exodus 3:12** – *"And God said, 'I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.' "*
- **1 Kings 3:5-15** (need to have that place marked in your Bible or have someone read it)
- **Hebrews 5:5-6** – *"So Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father. ' And he says in another place, 'You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.' "*
- **Hebrews 7:18-20** – *"The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God. And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath, but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him: 'The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest forever.' "*

Genesis Leaders Guide Week 3

- From Matthew Henry are these words, “**God said**, Let there be light; he willed it, and at once there was light. Oh, the **power of the word of God!** And in the new creation, the first thing that is wrought in the soul is light: the blessed Spirit works upon the will and affections by enlightening the understanding. Those who by sin were darkness, by grace become light in the Lord. Darkness would have been always upon fallen man, if the Son of God had not come and given us understanding.”¹
 - **1John 5:20** “We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true--even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.
- b) “**God saw...**” see Genesis 6:12-13; Jonah 3:10
- **Genesis 6:12-13** – “God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. So God said to Noah, “I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth “
 - **Jonah 3:10** – “When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened. “
 - This is an indication that God watches His creation – we cannot escape His observations.
- c) “**God called...**” see Genesis 3:8-9; Exodus 3:4; 1 Corinthians 7:17-24
- **Genesis 3:8-9** – “Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”“
 - Can you imagine such a personal relationship with God that he would come looking for you in the cool of the day?
 - He does that today! In fact, no one would come to Him on their own initiative. Our fallen nature won’t allow it. He must call us to Himself or we would never come. Remember our Romans study on this topic.
 - Do you see God’s interest in His creation of people?
 - **Exodus:3:4** – “When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush “Moses! Moses!” And Moses said, “Here I am.”“
 - Here is another case where God sought out the person – He even had to call Moses or he would never have done the things God had for him to do. But notice Moses’ response – *here I am*. Have you made that response to His call? If not, today would be a good time to do so.
 - **1 Corinthians 7:17-24** – (lengthy passage – have marked in your Bible – have someone read)
 - Here Paul discusses our responsibility to retain the place in life that the Lord has assigned us.
 - Paul elaborates here on the fact that our position (circumcision/uncircumcised) means nothing but keeping God’s command is what counts.
 - Do you see His concern for our actions and daily lives?
 - We as people say things, we see things, today there is a lot of calling going on, we make things, we don’t create literally, but we often call inventing creating, and we put things in their place.
 - Isn’t it interesting that our Creator exhibits the same faculties but on an infinite scale!
 - Creation demonstrates to us that God is a personal God and not an abstract idea.
 - We can have a personal relationship with a personal God.
 - Some of His personal traits we have seen in these verses is that He speaks, sees and acts.

(+7 min)

Application 1: What have you learned about the person of God today? How will you use that knowledge with others today?

(+1 min)

Day 2: The relationship of light and the person of God. – Read Genesis 1:3-5

1. Using a dictionary, write the definitions for darkness:

- Dark(ness)– (Webster’s) – devoid or partially devoid of light; not receiving, reflecting, transmitting, or radiating light.
- Dark(ness) – (Nelson’s) – the absence of light. Dark existed before the light of creations. Since darkness was associated with the chaos that existed before the creation, it came to be associated with evil, bad luck, or affliction (Job 17:12; 21:17). Darkness also describes the condition of those who have not yet seen the light concerning Jesus (John 1:4-5; 12:35; Eph. 5:14).
- Answers will vary regarding definitions

(+1 min)

2. Read the following passages and identify what is being said about “darkness:”

- Exodus 10:21; Joshua 24:7; 1 Samuel 2:9; Matthew 6:22-23; John 1:3-5; Ephesians 5:8; Jude 1:6

Exodus 10:21 – *“Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that darkness will spread over Egypt--darkness that can be felt.”*”

- This is when Moses was told to bring darkness over Egypt – think of what it says, *darkness that can be felt!*

Joshua 24:7 – *“But they cried to the LORD for help, and he put darkness between you and the Egyptians; he brought the sea over them and covered them. You saw with your own eyes what I did to the Egyptians. Then you lived in the desert for a long time “*

- God used darkness to protect His people.

1 Samuel 2:9 – *“He will guard the feet of his saints, but the wicked will be silenced in darkness.”It is not by strength that one prevails “*

- Darkness is related to the wicked and it will silence them! God’s darkness can overpower their strength!

Matthew 6:22-23 – *““The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! “*

- Seems this is a caution for us today – we have so many opportunities to allow “darkness” into our thoughts through what we see. Many adults don’t think watching “dark” (violence, sex, etc.) things will bother them but think on this – if adults can’t be influenced by sight, in spite of their thinking, why would corporations spend millions of dollars to advertise for a mere 28 seconds in sporting events? Seem we need to be careful what we let in our minds is a message for us today.

John 1:3-5 – *“Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it “*

- Why would the “darkness” not understand the “light?” Because it is the presence of the Holy Spirit that reveals the light to us. Without His influence in our lives, we will not understand the “light.”

Ephesians 5:8 – *“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light “*

- This verse is for believers in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.
- Answers and opinions will vary but this question is to help us see the significance of what Jesus says in **John 8:12**, *“When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*
- We all tend to associate evil with darkness even from childhood.

- We were not designed to live in the dark but in the *light of God* as Malcolm said in his message on Sunday, December 16th, 2012.

(+4 min)

3. Using a dictionary, write the definitions of light:

- Light – (Webster’s) – something that makes vision possible; the sensation aroused by stimulation of the visual receptors; an electromagnetic radiation... visual range... travels in vacuum 186,281 mps.
- Light – (Nelson’s) – illumination; the opposite of darkness. The Bible also speaks of light as a symbol of God’s presence and righteous activity. Light has been associated with the presence, truth, and redemptive activity of God since creation.
- Have people share their findings.

(+1 min)

4. Identify the association of *light* with God in the following passages. What is something you learned about God?

- 2 Samuel 22:29; Isaiah 2:5; Matthew 5:14-16; 1 John 1:5-7

2 Samuel 22:29 – “*You are my lamp, O LORD; the LORD turns my darkness into light.*”

- God is our lamp, our *darkness* He can turn into light!

Isaiah 2:5 – “*Come, O house of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the LORD*”

- Walking in the light... what is this verse saying?
- “Isaiah frequently accused God's people of not walking in his ways (42:24; 58:2; 63:17). Micah (4:5) contemplated the idolatry of the nations and expressed, on the part of his people, Judah's determination (probably superficial as far as they were concerned) to walk in the ways of the Lord. Isaiah viewed the future obedience of the nations to the true God as a challenge to the house of Jacob to walk in his ways. The nations are not yet coming to Jerusalem to be taught by the Lord, but Israel already has his word. How unthinkable then that she should continue to walk in darkness! The Christian is faced by the same kind of challenge in Ephesians 5:8-20.”²

Matthew 5:14-16 – “*You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*”

- God desires us to reveal the *light* He has revealed to us through our being born again through His Son Jesus Christ.
- We are to share the good news of the gospel message. It’s not an option but a command to do so.

1 John 1:5-7 – “*This is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: **God is light**; in Him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with Him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*”

- John reveals the truth of it all – *God is light!*

(+3 min)

Application 2: What “light” has God given you to act upon or share this week?

(+1 min)

Day 3: God is a God of order and detail. – Read Genesis 1:6-10, 14-19

1. Reading verses 6-10, how do you see God as a God of order in the passages below?

- Jeremiah 10:12; Psalm 104:6-9; 1 Corinthians 14:33; 2 Peter 3:5

Jeremiah 10:12 – *“But God made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding “*

- He ordered the heavens according to His power!

Psalm 104:6-9 – *“You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. But at your rebuke the waters fled, at the sound of your thunder they took to flight; they flowed over the mountains, they went down into the valleys, to the place you assigned for them. You set a boundary they cannot cross; never again will they cover the earth “*

- He is orderly in the methods He uses to set boundaries of His creation.

1 Corinthians 14:33 – *“For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. As in all the congregations of the saints “*

- Paul knew that God was not a God of disorder but of peace – seems a message here is that to have peace requires some level of orderliness.
- Seems to make sense if you think about it.

2 Peter 3:5 – *“But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. “*

- Peter saw the orderliness of God’s creation as he shares some of the beginnings with those he is writing to.
- Dr. James Boice says, “God’s standing behind all things is not the only point of the creation account. These verses (*in Genesis*) also teach that creation was according to an orderly unfolding of the mind and purpose of God. That is, it was a step-by-step progression marked by a sequence of six significant days.”³
- God is a God of order, not chaos.
- He is a God of purpose, not chance.
- A lesson we can take from this is that we should be creatures of purpose and order.

(+4 min)

2. Read verses 14-19 along with the passages below and comment on how you see God as a God of detail:

- Psalm 74:16, 104:19; Job 38:31-32; Isaiah 40:26; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 1:3-6

- Answers will vary but the discussion should focus on the many details we have seen in this creation account and how God is a God of detail.

Psalm 74:16 – *“The day is yours, and yours also the night; you established the sun and moon“*

- God is in the details of day and night, He placed the sun and moon – do you realize how precise these two heavenly bodies had to be placed to cause all this to work?

Psalm 104:19 – *“The moon marks off the seasons, and the sun knows when to go down. “*

- Here we see His detail in the identifying and producing seasons so life can exist!

Job 38:31-32 – *““Can you bind the beautiful Pleiades? Can you loose the cords of Orion? Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons or lead out the Bear with its cubs?“*

- This is a question God was asking Job regarding the heavens. God’s detail is seen in the control and placement of stars, galaxies, planets, solar systems – what a God!

Isaiah 40:26 – *“Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.”*

- God is so detailed that He has all the heavenly bodies named!

Ephesians 2:10 – *“For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do”*

- God planned in detail a plan for each of our lives before we were even born!

Philippians 1:3-6 – *“I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”*

- God is in the details of our lives and is there to help along the way so we may complete our *good work!*
- (+4 min)

3. We can see how detailed God is in respect to our everyday life by what Jesus says in Matthew 6:25-34. How do these verses encourage you?

- This is a personal question and sharing should be by volunteering, not forced.

(+2 min)

Application 3: How will you trust in Jesus' words in Matthew 6:25-34 today and this week? Forever?

(+1 min)

Day 4: God is life. – Read Genesis 1:11-13, 20-25

1. From verses 11-13, what do you think was His purpose for this step in creation? What do you learn from Luke 3:8, and Luke 19:39-40 about God's being life?

Luke 3:8 – *“Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.”*

Luke 19:39-40 – *“Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, ‘Teacher, rebuke your disciples!’ ‘I tell you,’ he replied, ‘if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.’”*

- In preparation for the next life forms He would create – animals, birds
- Our passages indicate to us that He can give life to stones!
- “Mother earth” in and of herself does not have the power to procreate.
- Only God can give the power to bring into being other things.
- God was and is sovereign over all acts of creation.
- Nothing grows or is born apart from the sovereign hand of God.

(+2 min)

2. Following vegetation, God continues His miraculous creation on the land (verses 20-25)? What do you think His purpose was for this step in creation? What knowledge does this give you about God?

- Again, in preparation for the next life form – people – we will study that next week.
- Answers will vary regarding the second part of this question – it is personal.
- J. I. Packer talks about *Knowing God*. Packer identifies four main themes... “First, ‘knowledge of God’ does not refer to some natural human awareness of God, but to a knowledge which arises within a

relationship. Secondly, knowledge of God is more than any particular experience of God. Faith is about trust in God, from which particular experiences of God have their origins. Thirdly, knowledge of God is ‘more than knowing about God, although knowing about God is its foundation.’”⁴

- Packer here draws a distinction between ‘knowledge by description’ and ‘knowledge by acquaintance.’ “While it is necessary to have a correct understanding of God as the righteous, wise and merciful creator and judge, true knowledge of God must also be ‘relational knowledge, knowledge that comes to us in the relations of commitment and trust, faith and reliance.’ Forthly, to know God is also to know God’s relationship to us.... To know God is to know ourselves; to know ourselves truly, we must know God.”

(+2 min)

3. What does the word “blessed” (verse 22) imply to you? What was the blessing?

- The word “blessed” means to make happy, to receive divine favor.
- God’s gift of life comes with His blessings.
- He blesses all His creatures from the first swarm of fish to the people that He will choose to be His own inheritance and all who have been redeemed by Jesus Christ.
- Ephesians 1:3 says, “*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ*”
- The blessing in this case was to be fruitful and multiply – in other words, they were given the power of reproduction.
- The key words are “fruitful,” “multiply,” and “fill.”
- These new created living creatures become recipients of a life-giving divine power by virtue of which they themselves are capable of passing on the life they have received in God.

(+2 min)

4. Read Job 39:1-30. From this passage and your own observation of nature, what is God’s attitude toward the creatures He has made? What does this tell you about the kind of God He is?

- Answers will vary – watch your time, this is a long passage chucked full of discussion possibilities!
- The focus here again is that God is life! He is the giver of life – we are to respect life as He does.

(+2 min)

5. Identify some of God’s attributes in these verses 1:11-13 and 20-25.

- Answers will vary but the idea is to gain more knowledge about God and thus come to know Him better.

(+2 min)

Application 4: Which of these “attributes” of God (true qualities of His person) speaks to a need in your life today?

(+1 min)

Day 5: God’s goodness. – Genesis 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25

1. Using a dictionary(ies) write the definitions of *good* and *goodness*:

Good – (Webster’s) *adj.* - of a favorable character or tendency; *noun* – something conforming to the moral order of the universe, praiseworthy character.

Goodness – (Webster’s) the quality or state of being good

Good – (Nelson’s) The word *good* has two distinct meanings in the Bible:

1. As an adjective, **good** means “pleasant” – **Proverbs 15:23** – “A man finds joy in giving an apt reply-- and how good is a timely word!”, “kind” – **1 Samuel 25:15** – “Yet these men were very good to us. They did not mistreat us, and the whole time we were out in the fields near them nothing was missing.”

2. As a noun, **good** means primarily God Himself – **Mark 10:18** – ““Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good--except God alone.”. The Bible also speaks of God’s works, gifts, and commands as good.

Goodness – (Nelson’s) – the quality of being good; praiseworthy character; moral excellence.

The Bible speaks often of the goodness of God.

God’s goodness consists of righteousness, holiness, justice, kindness, grace, mercy, and love.

Goodness is also one of the fruits of the Spirit that should characterize Christian believers.

Christians are called to goodness, even as God the Father is perfect and good.

(+2 min)

2. God pronounces things as “good” in these verses. For each verse, what is He pronouncing good?

- Genesis 1:10 – the dry land and gathered waters
- Genesis 1:12 – the vegetation the land produced, fruit, trees
- Genesis 1:18 – the heavenly lights, sun, and moon
- Genesis 1:21 – the creation of sea creatures and birds
- Genesis 1:25 – living creatures: livestock, ground creatures, wild animals.

(+1 min)

3. What do you think is the significance of God making these pronouncements of good?

- From James Boice, “This pronouncement is not made because we can point to an object and say pragmatically, “That thing is useful to me and is therefore good to me.” God’s pronouncement on the goodness of creation came even before we were made. The pronouncement is made *because the object is good in itself....* A tree is good because God made it and pronounced it good.”
- He goes on, “The value of creation, declared good by God, bring us to a natural conclusion: If God finds the universe good in its parts and as a whole, then we must find it good also.... It is marred by thorns, weeds, disease. But even in its marred state it has value, just as fallen man also has value.”
- The significance of these pronouncements is that what God created is like Him: holy, righteous, just, sinless, perfect, and the list will match the list that describes God’s attributes!
- We should therefore be the world God has made and praise Him for it.
- We should have delight in creation and sense a responsibility towards nature, meaning we should not destroy it simply for the sake of destroying it.

(+1 min)

4. What do you learn about the goodness of God from these verses Luke 1:19; Romans 8:28; 1 Timothy 4:4; 2 Timothy 3:16-17?

Luke 1:19 – “The angel answered, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. “

- By the goodness of God He sent Gabriel to Mary and followed that with His only Son, Jesus Christ

- That is the purest goodness possible!

Romans 8:28 – “*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose*”

- This is a verse for believers to trust in and lean on when things aren’t going so well.

1 Timothy 4:4 – “*For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving*”

- What can you add to this?
- We truly need to praise God for the wonderful creation He has placed us in.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 – “*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work*”

- Scripture is the way we come to know God on a personal basis.
- The words “*God-breathed*” are significant – we can trust that God’s holy Word is without error!
- It can be trusted, believed, relied on, and lived by.

Application 5: For His creation, we need to be *thankful, delight in it, and be responsible toward it*. How will you illustrate your thankfulness, delight and responsibility towards creation today? Each day?

(+1 min)

Closing Comments

- Just a brief summary of what we have discussed about the *person of God* in this lesson:
- His human like qualities are that He sees, calls, and talks.
- He creates things and He makes things from His creation --- What He creates and makes are *very good*.
- He is light, He is orderly, and He is detailed.
- Everything belongs to Him and is for His glory (*not man’s*).
- He blesses and is a giver of gifts.
- He is good, wise, omnipotent, sovereign, and loves His creation, especially people!
- Is He worthy of our praise? Yes, in fact, He is the only one worthy of true praise!

(+2 min)

Closing Prayer

(+1 min)

¹ Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary, “Bible Explorer The Complete Bible Reference Library,” Epiphany Software, 1999

² Frank Gaebelein, “The Expositor’s Bible Commentary,” Zondervan Reference Software, version 2.6, 1998,

³ Dr. James Montgomery Boice, “Genesis Volume 1 Creation and Fall Genesis 1-11,” Baker Books, ISBN 0-0810-1161-2

⁴ J. I. Packer, “The J. I. Packer Collection,” InterVarsity Press, 1999, ISBN 0-8308-2287-9, pages 137-138