

Foundation Bible Class
Lesson 1
God
Genesis 1:1; Deut. 4:7; 1 John 5:7; John 4:24, Psalm 19:1-6

The study of God is the highest of all study. It is to be done with utmost reverence and godly fear. This study gives us access to true knowledge beyond human intelligence. This knowledge is primarily revealed by God to man in His Word, the Bible. It is called Special Revelation.

How can man know God? He does so by looking at the created world around him. It gives testimony of the Creator God. He does so by studying God's revealed Word. It's God's Self-Revelation of all things pertaining to true knowledge of Himself. He does so by His Son, Jesus Christ, the living Word.

Theology is the study of the knowledge of God. It is derived from the compound word in Greek consisting of "θεός" "theos" which means "God" and "λόγος" "logos" which means "knowledge or study of".

Theology higher than Philosophy. For "Philo" means "love" and "sophy" from "sophos" meaning wisdom hence "the love of human wisdom." The knowledge of God is far superior to human wisdom.

The study of God must be done by "faith" in believing God's revealed Word. John Calvin described well what is "faith" when he said in his book "Institute of the Christian Religion":

"Faith is far superior to human intelligence. It comes from the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Faith, thus given by God, has a twofold aspect. It enlightens the mind to understand the truth of God, and establishes the heart in it. And the Holy Spirit not only originates faith, but increases it by degrees, till He conducts us by it all the way to heaven."

Hence, the study of God increases faith. Faith in His ability to help us in our every situation of life!

(1) God Is Creator

To know and fellowship with the living and true God is man's greatest privilege because He is the Source of his blessings. More so, He is the Source of his being. He is the One that gives life to us and sustains our life!

The Chinese character for "blessedness" is 福, pronounced "fu". Interesting, it is made of the following radicals:

One (一) man (口) with God (神) in a garden or field (田).

When a man is in close fellowship with His Creator God, this is true blessedness. **God is the Source of our blessings.** This is a truth that the Bible, God's Word, declares to us in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning, God created ..."

The creation account tells us in Genesis 1 and 2:

When God made the universe, the earth was the focus!

When God made the earth, man was the focus!

Man was made to have dominion on all of God's creation on earth.

When we look at the world around us, we see the work of a Grand Designer, there is beauty and order in creation. The earth and the planets in the solar system moves in their designated orbit. The orderliness of the vast universe gives testimony to a great God as the Creator and Grand Designer! This is called Natural Revelation.

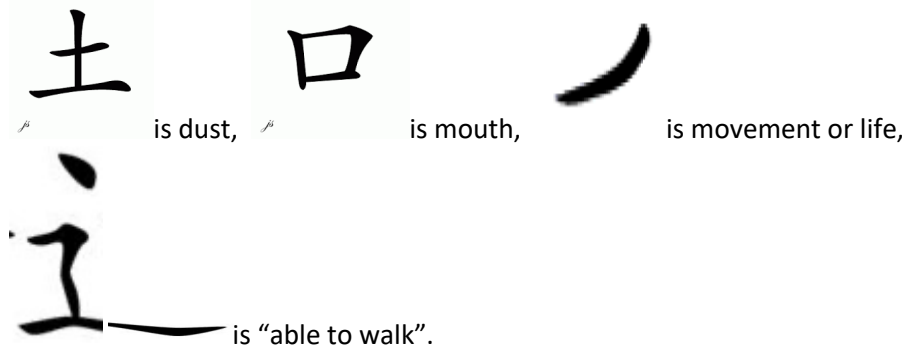
The psalmist declares, *“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. 6 His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.”*

The marvel of the human body. It gives testimony to God as the Maker. The psalmist David testifies *“I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.”* (Psalm 139:14)

If you read Genesis 2:4 c.f. 2:7, the word “LORD” is first used “**יהוה**” “YHWH” to signify the close relationship between God and man.

Genesis 2:7 *“And the **LORD** God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”*

This is the Chinese character 造 is a description of the truth that man is made by God.



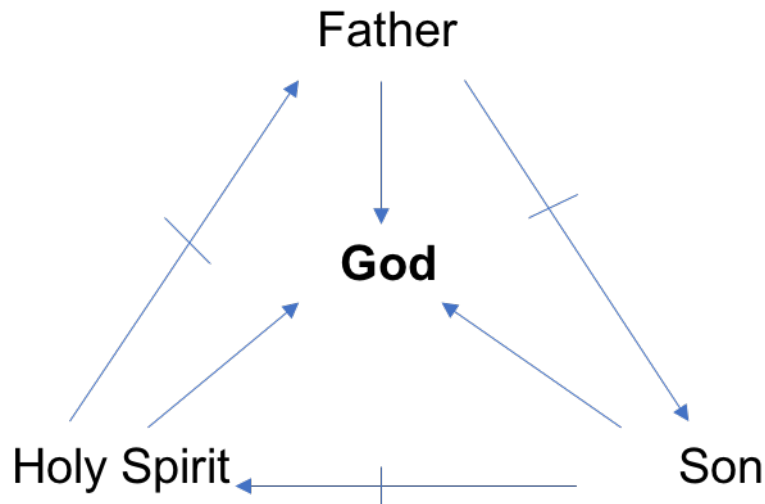
God is the source of man’s existence, our existence. He is the source of our blessedness. God is our Creator and Sustainer. It is imperative that we know Him and be in fellowship with Him.

Whereas we exist in the human body, God is a Spirit (John 4:24). He cannot be seen. How then can we know Him? He reveals Himself to us in God’s Word, the Bible.

(2) The Trinity

The Lord our God is One LORD (Deut. 4:7), but He exist in 3 Persons – God the Father is God, God the Son is God, and God the Holy Spirit is God.

The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is not the Father. Three distinct Persons in the Godhead yet one God as represented by the illustration below.



The mathematical formula to represent God is not $1 + 1 + 1 = 3$, but $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$. One God, yet existing in 3 distinct Persons.

1 John 5:7 "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

John 1:1-5, 14 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** The same was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. **4** In him was life; and the life was the light of men. **5** And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not....**14** And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

The Son is the Word coming in human flesh (John 1:14).

The Study of God Gives Us a Reason for our Hope

The study of God helps us to be firmly grounded in our faith so that we may give a reason of the hope that is us.

1 Peter 3:15 "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."

The Study of God leads us to God's Final Revelation - Jesus Christ

We said earlier that the Knowledge of God is given by God to man called Special Revelation.

The Bible is God's Special Revelation. Jesus Christ is God's Final Revelation.

Hebrews 1:1-3 "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, **Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son**, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, **by whom also he made the worlds** (Jesus is Creator); **Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person** (Jesus is God), **and upholding all things by the word of his power** (Jesus is the Sustainer of the universe), **when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high** (Jesus is Saviour)."

Who is Jesus Christ? He is the Son of God. He is Creator and Sustainer of the Universe and Saviour to every child of God. The Source of All Our Blessings is Jesus Christ.

Only Jesus, only Jesus (2x)
Only He can satisfy,
Every burden is turned to blessing,
When I know my Lord is nigh.

(3) Attributes of God

Question 4 of Westminster Shorter Catechism

What is God?

God is a Spirit¹, infinite², eternal³, and unchangeable⁴ in his being⁵, wisdom⁶, power⁷, holiness⁸, justice, goodness, and truth⁹.

¹ **John 4:24** God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

² **Job 11:7-10 (KJV)** ⁷ Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? ⁸ *It is* as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? ⁹ The measure thereof *is* longer than the earth, and broader than the sea. ¹⁰ If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him?

³ **Psalm 90:2** Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou *art* God.

⁴ **James 1:17** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

⁵ **Exodus 3:14** And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

⁶ **Psalm 147:5** Great *is* our Lord, and of great power: his understanding *is* infinite.

⁷ **Revelation 4:8** And the four beasts had each of them six wings about *him*; and *they were* full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

⁸ **Revelation 15:4** Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for *thou only art* holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

⁹ **Exodus 34:6-7 (KJV)** ⁶ And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, ⁷ Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear *the guilty*; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth *generation*.

The incommunicable Attributes of God belongs only to Him. But the communicable attributes of God can be imparted to us!

May these communicable attributes of God more and more be a part of our daily lives till we see Him in glory.

GOD

Incommunicable Attributes	Communicable Attributes
God is Spirit	Being
Infinite	Wisdom
Eternal	Power
Unchangeable	Holiness
	Justice
	Goodness
	Truth

MAN

Man is a living soul
finite
temporal
changeable

The 7 Aspect of God's Communicable Attributes:

(1) God is Infinite, Eternal and Unchangeable in His Being

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth...because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets...Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. (Ecclesiastes 12:1a, 7)

→ Be very sure of your eternal destiny!

We come into "being" when we acknowledge God in Christ Jesus.

(2) God is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His Wisdom

His understanding is infinite. (Psalms 147:5)

James 1:5 *"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."*

- (a) Acknowledge that perfect wisdom belongs to God.
- (b) It is revealed to us in His perfectly preserved Word.
- (c) Availing God's wisdom through prayer.

(3) God is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His Power

This doctrine of the **omnipotence of God** brings us comfort and patience. Let God be pre-eminent in our lives. He is able to help and He never fails. Let us seek Him first in everything.

Isaiah 40:28-31 *"Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that **wait upon the LORD** shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."*

(4) God is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His Holiness

The holiness of God is the essence of His moral character. It denotes His absolute purity – totally separated from all evil and defilement.

It declares our sinfulness and prompts us to live holy lives. We have been cleansed by our Lord Jesus Christ based in His finished work of the cross. All who believe have been freed from the bondage of sin. We have a free will to choose not to sin. This is the great privilege God has given us. He treats us as adults. We are to live as adults. We saw that Isaiah knew that he has been cleansed and his whole desire was to thank his Master for the forgiveness he has received in his repentance. These are his words of consecration.

Isaiah 6:8 *“Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.”*

(5) God is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His Justice

The justice of God naturally stems from His holiness. The Hebrew word *tsaddiq* means “straight” and the Greek word *dikaio*s means “upright”. Both words refer to the justice of a holy God. *God’s justice* is the outward expression of His holiness for He cannot tolerate sin. This applies to both believers and unbelievers.

It is indeed the just nature of God that He has to send His only begotten Son to justify sinners for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). If God did not send Jesus Christ to die on the cross then there would have been no remedy for sin and the justice of God requires that all be condemned to the destruction of eternal hell fire.

This attribute of God’s character also gives hope to the oppressed of His people that God will vindicate and strikes fear in the heart of the oppressor that God will catch up with them for their evil deeds.

Justice will prevail for God is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His justice. There is therefore no escape for every evil doer. May we make right with God in every aspect of our life for a just God demands a payment for every transgression of His law.

May we flee to the cross for cleansing where we have fallen and be patient to wait upon the Lord in prayer where we have experienced injustice.

(6) God is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His goodness

The word “goodness” in Hebrew is the masculine noun *hesed* meaning “goodness, kindness” in Exodus 34:6-7. It is an expression of God’s love for God is love.

When used of God it depicts His kindness, lovingkindness in condescending to the needs of his creatures, more especially to sinners, in unmerited kindness. God’s goodness is described as abundant.

May the Lord help us to see His goodness (kindness) by softening our hearts and come back to Him where we have backslidden. If God had punished us according to our sins, we would have perished long ago. Remember Israel in the wilderness who went a whoring. God heard Moses’ plea and showed His mercy not to completely destroy them. As an application, have we been showing kindness to others who have been most undeserving? May this attribute of God’s goodness be manifested in our lives.

(7) God is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His truth

The word “truth” speaks of the truthfulness or faithfulness of God to His covenant or promise or word. It has the following nuances (1) reliability and sureness (2) stability, continuance (3) faithfulness, reliability as an attribute of God in Exodus 34:6 and Psalm 86:15. God is described as abundant, great, many. He does not change His mind and is fickle like men are.

He is the God of truth, truthfulness and faithfulness in that He does not lie – “*it was impossible for God to lie*” (Hebrews 6:18), “*If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.*” (2 Timothy 2:13) and “God cannot lie” (Titus 1:2) against His revelation. Also, Truth is absolute! There is no negotiation with the truth.

Truth of Scripture is faithfulness, reliability, integrity, and consistency, all are the attributes of a person. We too are to be truthful and honest.

A direct application of this doctrine is the submission of every believer to the truth of God and to walk in it for their blessings. God’s will is God’s plan and purpose for His creation and for each individual and is revealed in His Word (Psalm 86:11).

Let us be reminded of these 7 aspects of life when as we ponder the attributes of God.

- (1) Being - Our Spiritual Birth
- (2) Wisdom - Our Devotional Life
- (3) Power - Our Comfort
- (4) Holiness - Our Purity
- (5) Justice - Our Hope
- (6) Goodness - Our Benevolence
- (7) Truth - Our Submission

CONCLUSION

May the knowledge of God lead His people to worship and adoration, praise and thanksgiving, obedience and consecration. Amen.

Quiz 1: GOD

Fill in the blanks (one letter for each space).

(1) The study of God is the _____ of all study.

(2) God deserves our utmost _____ and _____.

(3) Faith is far _____ to human _____.

(4) The Lord our God is One _____ (Deut. 4:7).

(5) The study of God leads us to God's _____ Revelation - _____

(6) What is God?

(7) What are the incommunicable attributes of God?

(8) What are the communicable attributes of God?

(9) God's goodness is described as _____.

(10) The holiness of God is the essence of His _____ character. It denotes His absolute _____ – totally separated from all _____ and _____.