

Sample Lesson

**In the Beginning – God**

**A lesson series from the books of Moses considering the attributes and personality of God, especially as He progressively revealed Himself to mankind through His creation, His judgments,** **and His work of redemption.**

**Lesson #** 1 (Introductory Thoughts)

**Theme or main thrust of this lesson:** This series is a study on knowing God, yet how can God really be “known” by fallen mankind when one of the very attributes of God is that He is incomprehensible? Since He is so transcendent, and we are so fallen, how can we really know Him?

**Text:**  **Job 11:7-8 Canst thou by searching find out \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? (8) *It is* as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst \_\_\_\_\_\_ know?**

**Introduction:** We acknowledge as we begin this series that we are “out of our league” and “over our heads” and “beyond our abilities” to rightly portray the Most High God. We concede that we cannot know God in His perfect essence, but joyfully we can, and MUST, know as much about Him as He has revealed to us through His creation, His Word, His Spirit and His Only Begotten Son. We joyfully accept each of these as authoritative and instructive, (and tangibly) the King James Bible will be considered as the perfect revealed Word of God in these matters.

From the outset we recognize that the closest any of us in this age can come to knowing what God is truly like is by coming in faith to Jesus Christ. He came to earth to reveal the Father to us, and the richest vein of spiritual disclosure is mined when we truly see the Father in the Son by the Spirit through the Word of God. Note these words from John 14:

**Joh 14:6-9 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (7) If ye had known \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. (8) Philip saith unto him, Lord, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ us the Father, and it sufficeth us. (9) Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ seen the Father; and how sayest thou *then*, Shew us the Father?**

1. **FIRST OF ALL, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE HAVE A RIGHT CONCEPT OF GOD!** A. W. Tozer, opens the first chapter of his book titled, “***The Knowledge of the Holy***” with this momentous statement: ***“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us!”*** 
   1. He expounds on that idea for some time, and then makes another observation about the man who comes to a right belief about God. He says that he becomes burdened with a mighty weight, and explains: ***“That mighty burden is his obligation to God. It includes an instant and lifelong duty to love God with every power of mind and soul, to obey him perfectly, and to worship Him acceptably.”***
   2. He continues on this theme with the statement at the bottom of page 11, ***“The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of Him.”***
   3. He points out further that ***“The first step down for any church is taken when it surrenders its high opinion of God.”***
   4. He concludes with, ***“The heaviest obligation lying upon the Christian Church today is to purify and elevate her concept of God until it is once more worthy of Him – and of her”*** What a fantastic challenge these words are to us as we delve into this study of God’s attributes. May we “know Him,” whom to know aright is to know eternal life!
2. **THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATION – AND THE LIMITATION OF LANGUAGE.** The Bible makes plain from Psalm 19 and from Romans 1 that **creation** was intended to reveal some of the basic attributes of God to man. Language allows us to know much more, but it is still not sufficient to fully describe the ineffable goodness, majesty, and power of God.
   1. **Creation:** No matter what culture, background, or education a man has, he can still observe creation around him and know some important things about God. (This is the foundational reason for our study in the Pentateuch - particularly Genesis 1-11.)
      1. **Psa 19:1-3 <To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.> The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. (2) Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. (3) *There is* no speech nor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, *where* their voice is not heard.**
      2. **Rom 1:18-21 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; (19) Because that which may be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them. (20) For the invisible things of him from the creation of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: (21) Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.**
   2. **Language:** Jesus Christ is the “Word of God” by title and in very deed. Language, whether spoken or written, is the wonderful gift of God for communicating to the present and future generations. Our intellect and achievements are greatly enhanced by learning from the successes and failures of the past generations. However, language (though powerful) is still somewhat limited when it comes to adequately describing God. This is due to two factors: first, because our vocabulary is limited; secondly, because our finite minds have limited comprehension. Because of these things, God cannot be completely described in human words except to say that God is “not exactly like anything else we have ever known. He is not exactly like anything or anybody.”
      1. Whenever we use language to describe something that is unknown to the hearer (or reader) we use the “bridges” of simile, hyperbole, metaphor, comparison, etc. to go from the known to the unknown. Whenever the Spirit would acquaint us with something that lies beyond the field of our knowledge, He tells us that this thing is “***like***” something we already know. Though they give us some idea of what a thing is like, words are limited – they can never fully describe what the eye can see or the heart can experience. Notice how this is true in the writings of the Prophet Ezekiel:
         1. **Eze 1:4-5 And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness *was* about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire. (5) Also out of the midst thereof *came* the likeness of four living creatures. And this *was* their appearance; they had the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of a man.**
         2. **Eze 1:26-28 And above the firmament that *was* over their heads *was* the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne *was* the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. (27) And I saw \_\_\_\_\_ the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of fire, and it had brightness round about. (28) As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so *was* the appearance of the brightness round about. This *was* the appearance of the likeness of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the LORD. And when I saw *it*, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.**
            1. Notice in this passage the use of “as,” “appearance,” and “likeness” when describing God. This is an example of how the Bible helps the reader learn more about the “unknowable” God by comparing God’s throne and appearance to things the reader is already familiar with such as a “sapphire stone,” “a man,” “fire,” “(rain) bow.”
            2. You get an overall impression - a concept - yet you cannot precisely envision exactly what Ezekiel saw. He was so moved that he fell on his face when he saw the glory of God, and the reader is certainly left with a sense of awe of God from such description.
3. **THE PARADOX – WE CANNOT -- BUT WE MUST -- KNOW GOD.** Can we really know God? If so, to what extent? We can only really know Him to the extent that He reveals Himself to us, and we study His personality and His attributes so we can know “ABOUT” Him. But to really “KNOW” Him in any intimate way we must approach Him by faith, not by intellect. Tozer observed, “That God can be known in tender personal experience while remaining infinitely aloof from the curious eyes of reason constitutes a paradox best described by Frederick W. Faber: ***Darkness to the intellect, but sunshine to the heart***.” It is natural, since we were created by God and in His image, that our soul would sense its origin and would yearn to return to its source. Of all earthly creation, only mankind has this desire to know God.
   1. For us to know God, He must reveal himself to us.
      1. **1Co 2:14 But the natural man receiveth \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.**
      2. **1Co 1:21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.**
      3. **2Co 4:3-4 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: (4) In whom the god of this world hath \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.**
      4. **Joh 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *him*.**
      5. **Mat 11:27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and *he* to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him*.**
      6. **1Co 2:9-12 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. (10) But God hath \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. (11) For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. (12) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the things that are freely given to us of God.**
   2. Because we are mere humans and not God, we can never ***fully*** appreciate all that God is; neither in His essence, nor can we ***fully*** understand any single thing about Him. Furthermore, because we are all marred by the fall, our perception of God is obscured by our own sinfulness. And finally, we were blinded by the “God of this world” to the gospel message when were lost.
      1. In this life we are greatly hampered in our knowledge of God
         1. **Psa 145:3 Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness *is* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**
         2. **Psa 147:5 Great *is* our Lord, and of great \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: his understanding *is* infinite.**
         3. **Isa 55:8-9 For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. (9) For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ than your thoughts.**
         4. **Job 26:14 Lo, these *are* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand**?
         5. **Rom 11:33-34 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ finding out! (34) For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?**
      2. As believers, we can expect to continually learn more about God as we grow in Christ and as we enter eternity.
         1. **Col 1:9-10 For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; (10) That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_;**
         2. **1Co 13:12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ even as also I am known.**
         3. **Heb 8:11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, from the least to the greatest.**
   3. While we cannot know God **FULLY**, we can know Him **TRULY**!
      1. **Jer 9:23-24 Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches: (24) But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, that I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD.**
      2. **Joh 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.**
      3. **Joh 4:24 God *is* a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.** (Note- to worship Him acceptably we must know Him properly!)