

GOD IS HERE

DOCTRINE SESSION

MAIN POINT

God made a way to be with His people through
His Son, Jesus.



ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE **GOD IS IMMANENT** —————●

When we say God is immanent, we mean God is personable and relatable to those made in His image while remaining completely distinct and unique from all of His creation. It means God is not a distant deity (as imagined by the deist) who only sits on His heavenly throne with no interaction; instead, He is a personal God who created people in His image to be in personal relationship with Him.

ESSENTIAL **CONNECTION** —————●

In this unit, we saw Jesus appear to the disciples and others after the resurrection. He settled their doubts with His physical presence, leading them to acknowledge Him as Lord and God. Through Jesus, God proved His desire to dwell among us and be intimately known by us.

SCRIPTURE **READING** —————●

ISAIAH 55:8-11 • THE LORD IS WITH HIS PEOPLE FROM HIGH ABOVE

MATTHEW 28:16-18 • THE LORD IS WITH HIS PEOPLE WITH FULL AUTHORITY

MATTHEW 28:19-20 • THE LORD IS WITH HIS PEOPLE FOREVER AND ALWAYS



DOCTRINE VIDEO

(Videos available for purchase at gospelproject.com/students)

Many teens say they have only a few close friends, yet loneliness is rampant in our culture. It's crazy that we could have a few close friends and still feel alone. This might be the case for many reasons. Yes, we may have people we consider friends, but that may not mean we talk to them about our feelings. It doesn't mean we talk to them about everything that's going on at home—our parent's divorce or our anxiety. We can experience loneliness even when we're surrounded by people.

But believers are never truly alone. The fact that God is with you is an example of God's immanence—His ability to be with us and relate to us. Basically, even though God is so much higher than we are and His ways are greater than ours, He's still present in our lives. He's still a personal God who wants a personal relationship with each of us. The prophet Isaiah actually talked about this concept when He prophesied about Jesus's birth hundreds of years before Jesus was actually born. He said Jesus would be called Immanuel, which means God with us (see Isa. 7:14). God sent Jesus to be with us during everything we go through—in the middle of our sin and our mess. Through a relationship with Him, we can know we are never truly alone.

SUMMARY

- We can experience loneliness even if we have friends.
- Believers are never alone because of God's presence in our lives.
- God is personal and relatable; He wants to be a part of our daily lives.
- Immanuel literally means "God with us."

WATCH & DISCUSS

WHEN HAVE YOU STRUGGLED WITH LONELINESS?

WHAT EVIDENCE SHOWS GOD DESIRES TO BE WITH US?

HOW CAN YOU REMIND YOURSELF OF TRUTH WHEN YOU BATTLE FEELINGS OF LONELINESS?



SCRIPTURE READING

MAIN POINT

God made a way to be with His people through His Son, Jesus.

1. THE LORD IS WITH HIS PEOPLE FROM HIGH ABOVE

READ ISAIAH 55:8-11

Most of the book of Isaiah warned the people to turn back to God. Isaiah prophesied that they would suffer consequences if they continued to stray from God. Sadly, the Babylonians did conquer the Israelites, forcing them into exile in Babylon for seventy years. Jerusalem and the temple were left in ruins. The people must have wondered how this could be God's plan. How would God fulfill His vow to Abraham and make them a vast nation? But God would one day bring the people home to Jerusalem, restoring the nation and the temple. Isaiah reminded the people God is far above man; we can't begin to comprehend His ways; and He will always fulfill His Word.

WHEN HAS IT FELT AS IF GOD'S PROMISES WEREN'T BEING FULFILLED IN YOUR LIFE?

God's people were discouraged in Babylon. Many of them even turned their backs on the Lord; He seemed to have forgotten them. God wasn't distant, and He had a purpose. They were exiled in Babylon as a result of their rebellion against God, but God never veered from the promise He made to Abraham to make Israel into a vast nation—one that would bless the entire earth. This plan was in motion even though the people couldn't see it. When our circumstances cause us to doubt God's promises, we can rest knowing He is always at work to fulfill His Word.

HOW WOULD IT AFFECT OUR VIEW OF GOD IF WE COULD FULLY UNDERSTAND HIM?

We need God to be God. We don't need for Him to be like us. That we can't comprehend His ways may cause us to question what He's doing, but it should comfort us. He has a full understanding of all things. We only understand a small fraction. We can trust all God does because He is God.



ENGAGE OPTION

Ask students to consider the following questions:

WHEN HAVE YOU BROKEN YOUR WORD TO SOMEONE?

IS IT HARD TO KEEP YOUR WORD? WHY OR WHY NOT?

One of the major differences between God and us is our inability to always keep our word. Some people are better at this than others, but we've all been guilty of breaking a promise. God's Word never fails, and He never breaks a promise. We can completely trust in all He says and know He'll fulfill all of His promises to us.



ISAIAH 55:8-11

55:8-9. “The Lord is completely different from humans (not ... neither) in what and how he thinks (thoughts) and in his characteristic ways of action. This is a verse of very wide application, covering every aspect of life. It cancels the useless and debilitating question ‘Why?’ in face of life’s difficulties; it opens the door to the blessed reality of faith in a God who is truly God.”¹⁹

55:10-11. “But the central comparison is that just as rain cannot fall on the earth without fulfilling the role God gave it, so God’s words cannot fall from God’s mouth in heaven without fulfilling the role God gave them on earth. God does not make impotent threats or empty promises; when he talks people should listen because what he predicts is exactly what will happen. When God swears something, it will certainly happen because he speaks with integrity and faithfulness. He does not take back his statements (45:23).”²⁰

MATTHEW 28:16-18

28:18. “Jesus is passing the torch to his disciples, even as he promises to be with them forever—spiritually, not physically—to empower them for future mission. Jesus can make the claim of v. 18 only if he is fully God, inasmuch as the whole universe is embraced in the authority delegated to him. And yet he is still in some sense distinct from his Heavenly Father, so that Matthew can use the divine passive in speaking of his having ‘been given’ this authority.”²¹



ENGAGE OPTION

Ask students to generate as many ideas as possible for the following question:

IN WHAT WAYS IS GOD DIFFERENT FROM US?

Allow students to share their lists out loud. Draw attention to the truth that God is far above us in all ways. While we are made in His image, He is also nothing like us.



God made a way to be with His people through His Son, Jesus.

2. THE LORD IS WITH HIS PEOPLE WITH FULL AUTHORITY

READ MATTHEW 28:16-18

IN RESPONSE TO SEEING JESUS, SOME OF CROWD WORSHIPED WHILE OTHERS DOUBTED. WHAT IS YOUR RESPONSE TO JESUS?

Maybe the first time you attended a worship service you were skeptical of whether or not God's presence was really there. When Jesus met the people on the mountain, some of them responded this way too, but others fell down in worship. This is the right response; God is worthy of our worship.

“JESUS CAME NEAR” TO THE PEOPLE (SEE V. 18). HOW DOES THIS AND HIS RESPONSE COMFORT YOU?

Jesus came close to remind His followers of His complete authority. In other words, Jesus reminded them that they even when things feel confusing or scary, He is in complete control. But what does this really mean for us? Jesus comes close to us too. We don't have to worry. We all face hard, confusing circumstances—parents divorcing, failing a test, losing a friend, and so on. But Jesus has complete authority even over these things.

3. THE LORD IS WITH HIS PEOPLE FOREVER AND ALWAYS

READ MATTHEW 28:19-20

Imagine getting verbal instructions from Jesus! Imagine knowing exactly what He wants you to do! We spend a lot of time praying about and worrying about what we should do with our lives. But here's the deal: We did receive instructions. We know exactly what to do with our lives because Jesus gave us a clear command in His Word—the Great Commission. He tells us to help others know Him as we go about our lives.

WHY DO WE COMPLICATE OUR PURPOSE? WHY SHOULD WE FULFILL THE GREAT COMMISSION?

We get really caught up in the details. We focus on what we may become one day, but God tells us exactly what to do today—go and make disciples. He asks us to share the good news and help others grow in their faith. If we fail to do this, then other people may never know Jesus.

IN WHAT AREA OF YOUR LIFE DO YOU NEED TO BE REMINDED THAT GOD IS WITH YOU?

When we walk through something hard or experience rejection, we can feel lonely. But followers of Jesus are never alone. God dwells inside of us, enabling us to face all things through His strength. He is with you when you are waiting, hoping, grieving, and rejoicing—in all things.



28:18. “All is a key word in 28:18–20. It emphasizes Jesus’s divine identity: all authority, all nations, all things. Before issuing his commission, Jesus laid the foundation for the success of their future ministry: All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. . . . Without the Messiah’s authority, the mission of the disciples and our mission today would be doomed to failure.”²²

MATTHEW 28:19-20

28:19-20. “Matthew closes his Gospel with Jesus’s promise to be spiritually present with his followers until the end of this age, that is, until his return, when he will once again be present bodily (although ‘the end of the age’ might be an idiom roughly equivalent to forever). John describes how Jesus had explained this provision in much more detail as the ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 13–17). Acts 2 will describe the decisive moment of the fulfillment of this promise at Pentecost. Matthew chooses to leave his readers here. The disciples represent everyone in the church to which he writes and, derivatively, everyone who professes to follow Christ in any age. The Lord is now risen! He calls his people to become disciple makers, and he promises to be with them irrespective of their successes or failures.”²³

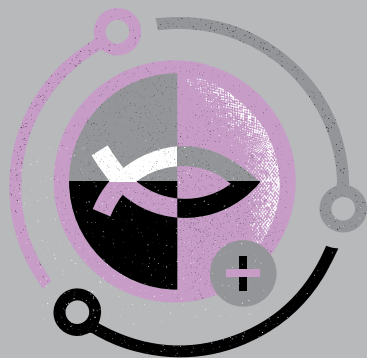
28:20. “A paraphrase of the phrase I am with you always would read, “I myself am continually with you always until the end of the age.” Among other things, Jesus claimed omnipresence, again laying claim to deity (note “Immanuel, God with us” in 1:23). He will be with us every step of the way. I am with you always reminds us of the great promises to saints of old like Moses (Ex. 3:12) and Joshua (Josh. 1:5).”²⁴



BIG QUESTION

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A DISCIPLE, AND HOW DO I MAKE DISCIPLES?

A disciple is a learner—a person who follows the teaching of someone else and tries to imitate him or her. We are called to be disciples, meaning we are to learn from Jesus and imitate His ways. One of the best ways to learn about who Jesus is and how He lived is by reading the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. As followers of Jesus, we are also called to make disciples (see Matt. 28:19). It was Jesus’s final command. It doesn’t require us to know everything; it requires us to live like Jesus and to tell others about Him. We do this by spending time with people who need Jesus. We tell them about how Jesus changed our lives, and we show them the change. We teach them what Jesus taught, and we love them the way Jesus loved.



CHRIST CONNECTION

God is immanent, meaning that although He is distinct from His creation, He is also personable and involved within it. Of the many ways God demonstrates His immanence, the greatest is through the earthly ministry of Jesus. Jesus came from above, lived a perfect life, gave up His life on the cross, and rose from the dead so that all who trust in Him might have a personal relationship with God.



HEAD



HEART



HANDS

KNOWING JESUS HAS ALL AUTHORITY IS IMPORTANT, BUT HOW CAN YOU BETTER SUBMIT TO HIS AUTHORITY?

We can mentally know Jesus has all authority and control without applying it to our lives. Head knowledge is important, but it's not enough. That knowledge must make its way to our hearts; it must transform us. If we know Jesus has total authority, then we can trust Him with all things—our futures, our dreams, our tough circumstances. More importantly, we can choose to submit to Him in our words and actions—in everything.

WHAT SITUATION IN YOUR LIFE OR SOMEONE ELSE'S LIFE FEELS LIKE IT ISN'T UNDER JESUS'S AUTHORITY?

When we or someone we know faces death, sickness, or disappointment, it can feel like a total loss of control. And in these moments, we aren't in control! But God is. When God's people wandered in the wilderness, they questioned God's purpose. They wondered if God had abandoned them, but He was fully aware of their situation and had a purpose. God doesn't delight in our hardships, but He is sovereign over them. Nothing that happens to us is a surprise to the Lord.

WHAT STEPS CAN YOU TAKE TO FULFILL THE GREAT COMMISSION?

Some of us may be called to the mission field or into ministry. But most of us are simply called to ordinary lives. No matter what God calls you to do, we all share the same purpose of telling others about Jesus. We are also called to use more than our words by showing others how to follow Him. We do this as we live—as we go to school, to work, to the store, and so on. It doesn't take a special calling to fulfill the Great Commission every day.