

GETTING
TO KNOW
GOD

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Eternally Self-Existing
Eternally Self-Sustaining
The Light of the World
The God of Israel

GETTING TO KNOW GOD

YAHWEH

The eternally self-existing, self-sustaining light of the world, and God of Israel

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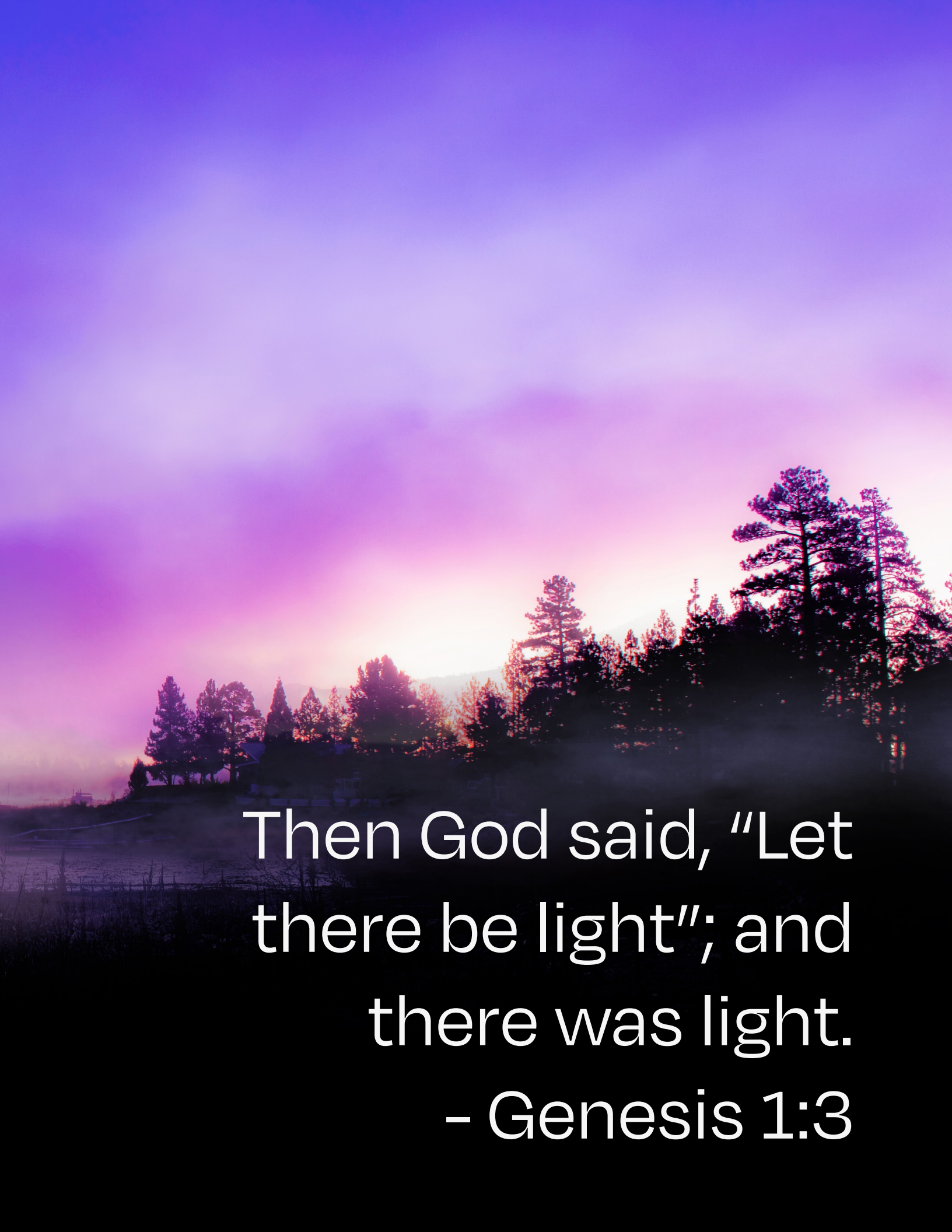
WEEK 1

LET

THERE

BE LIGHT





Then God said, "Let
there be light"; and
there was light.

- Genesis 1:3

GOD'S CHARACTER IN SCRIPTURE

Light is one of the most critical factors in human life. Without the sun's light, there would be no daytime. We wouldn't be able to see, nor would we have the heat produced by sunlight. Additionally, we wouldn't receive the nutrients that our bodies absorb from sunlight. Plant life wouldn't thrive, which would impact our oxygen supply and access to various foods. Life, as we know it, wouldn't exist. This is why light has come to symbolize many positive attributes and characteristics that are beneficial in life, such as wisdom, understanding, clarity, and hope. If not for God, none of this would exist.



"Let there be..."

When God said, "Let there be light," He didn't create light the same way He created everything else later that week. The English phrase "let there be" refers to God's revelation. God unveiled His natural essence as "light" in a new and physical way for our benefit. How was this different from the other things God did when He created the universe? We can look at God's work in creating Planet Earth, including the sun, moon, stars, trees, animals, and people. Those are things we relate to every day. The same is not true for what God did on the first day. He spoke light into existence before He created the tools we use to see and understand it. No one has ever experienced a situation where they could see light without also seeing its source. No one has ever seen "light" directly as the revelation of God's glory as He displayed it on that first day.

"And there was light..."

Also, notice that God's manifestation of light on that first day was aimed to benefit people who wouldn't be created for another five days. When God uses His power to reveal Himself, He does so with the future in mind, ultimately to glorify Himself. God didn't need another source or substance to make the light shine. He also didn't need an audience to understand the method and purpose of His work. The world was dark until God made His natural essence known to it, and those things were true before people could examine or experience them.

Without God's eternally self-existing and self-sustaining light, ultimately made manifest in Jesus Christ, our lives and world remain dark. This is true no matter public opinion or perspective. It has always been and will always be. Still, God makes His glory available to us, even before we need it, for our benefit. To Him be the glory!

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MAKING
CONNECTIONS

Please read the following verses and their surrounding context. Consider how these passages relate to Genesis 1:3 and describe different ways God's eternally self-existing and self-sustaining attributes are shown.

Job 36:26-30, Psalm 33:6-9, Psalm 97:11, Psalm 104:2, John 1:1-5, John 3:19, 1 John 2:3-11

KNOWING GOD



1) God revealed light through the power of His Word before He created the tools we use to see and understand light. How does this reality influence any ideas or thoughts you previously had about God?

2) God created the physical properties of light days before any living creatures, including humans, could benefit from it. What does that tell us about how God takes care of us? How does that align with your current view of God?

THINK ABOUT IT...

1) Thinking about modern culture, what qualities do we usually associate with "light"? Of those qualities, how many match the qualities of God? Is the world creating its own definitions, or unknowingly drawing from the Bible?



2) The scriptures teach that "light" is a result of God's Word. Considering the attributes of God you mentioned in the first question, how do these qualities connect to God's Word? Explain how your time in the Bible practically links you to "the light" of the LORD.

DIG DEEPER

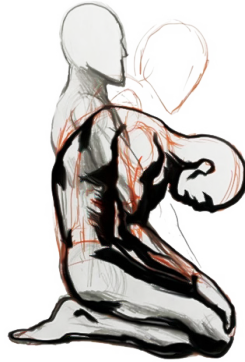


3) Think about some of your goals and ambitions. What would you like to accomplish in school, at work, with your family, and personally? In 1 John 1:7, the Bible teaches that a true Christian should “walk in the light as He is in the light” because the blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed us. Considering God’s attributes as “light” described in the Bible, how should the instruction in 1 John influence our goals, ambitions, and motives? Are there things in our lives, directly sinful or otherwise, keeping us from having the right goals or approaching them the right way?

Since the name YAHWEH emphasizes God’s eternal and spiritual nature, are there any adjustments we can make to ensure our goals align with God? How can we guarantee that our efforts to achieve our goals in life also reflect the likeness of Jesus Christ, “walking in the light”? What should our approach look like in our speech, actions, and attitudes?

Group Leader Notes: Try to encourage group participants to openly share their goals and ambitions, helping the group get to know each other and develop connections. As those things are shared, try to help the group understand whether they are planning their lives with any sort of spiritual and eternal focus. Don't be afraid to boldly, lovingly, and tactfully call out dangerous or sinful ambitions if they arise in the conversation. If unsure how to do so, make a note and seek help from a pastor.

LEVELING UP



YAHWEH is...

Eternally self-existing

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I understand the importance of recognizing that God is eternal, working from an eternal perspective with an eternal focus, leading to eternally centered outcomes. I need to direct my thoughts, needs, and goals through the lens of that truth.

Eternally self-sustaining

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I realize I need to remember that God is self-sustaining. He doesn't rely on anyone or anything to do His will or meet my needs according to His purpose for my life. I must base my understanding of life's circumstances on this truth. I don't need anything more than Him!

The God of Glory

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I realize that all glory, honor, and credit go to God, and rightly so. I must focus on His glory instead of my own, making sure my motives are pure and that I’m not trying to seek attention or praise for myself at His expense.

The Light of the World

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I realize that fulfilling Jesus’ command to live as “light” requires people to see His character and attributes, guided by His motives and purposes, not mine. I must evaluate my intentions daily to ensure my attitude, words, and actions reflect Jesus as described in His Word, rather than my natural “self.” His light overshadows all darkness!

Group Leader Notes: *Finish each meeting with these “resolutions” to give group members specific points to focus on through the week in light of the study material and discussions. It’s also a good idea to revisit these things the following week to start conversation, discover needs for prayer, and encourage accountability.*

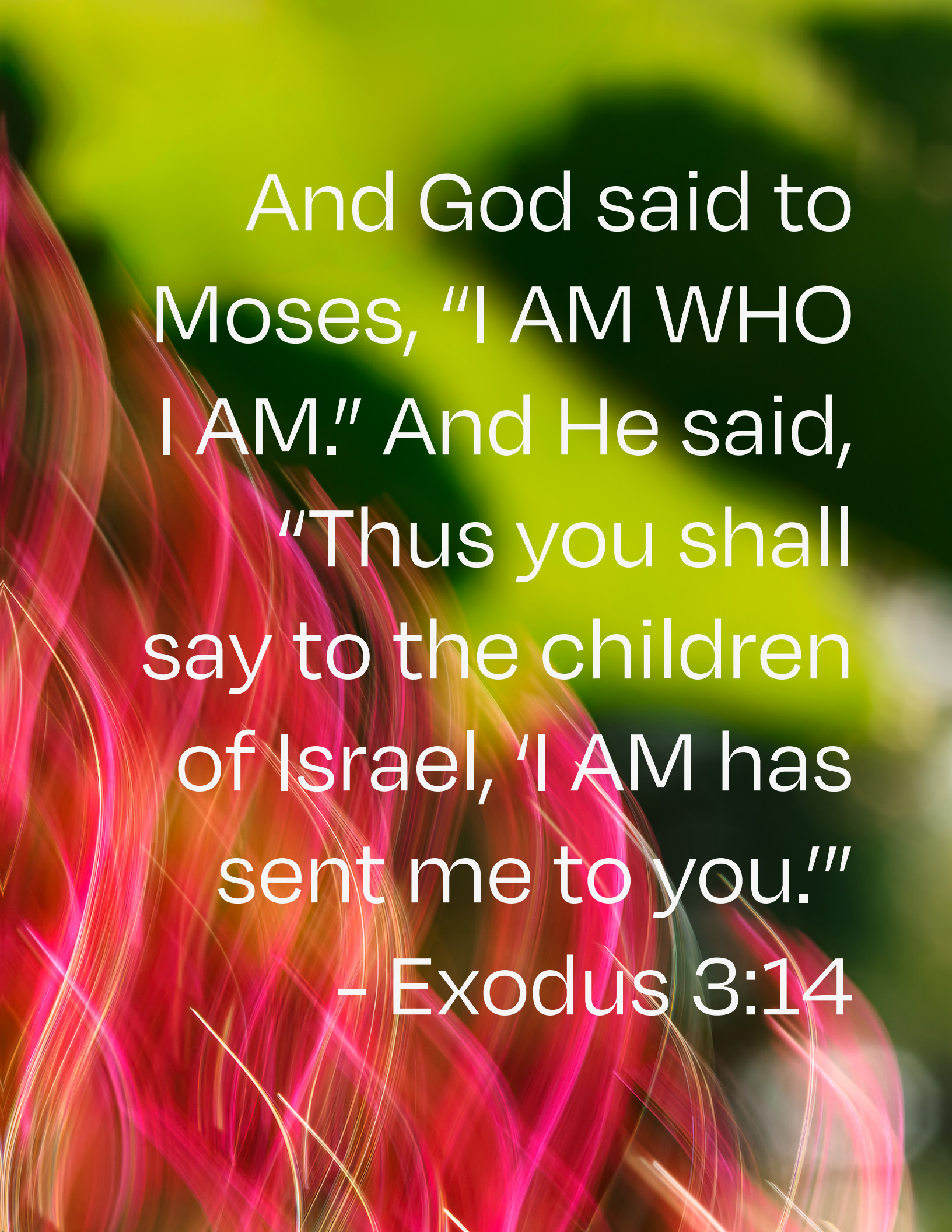
WEEK 2

THE

GREAT

I AM





And God said to
Moses, "I AM WHO
I AM." And He said,
"Thus you shall
say to the children
of Israel, 'I AM has
sent me to you.'"

- Exodus 3:14

GOD'S CHARACTER IN SCRIPTURE



The Bible teaches us that God is eternally self-existing and self-sustaining. Only the God of the Bible has this attribute. He is eternal. He always has been and exists by the power of His essence. He isn't dependent on anything to survive. He doesn't depend on anything or anyone to be sufficient, perfect, and whole.

This means that God is the source of all things and is unaffected by the things He created. There are rippling effects when something happens to someone in our sphere of influence. One person's circumstances can affect our circumstances. Think about how a traffic accident affects more than just the people involved. Our situation, attitude, worldview, and so forth are shaped by things that happen around us, whether we like it or not. It doesn't work this way for God.

"And God said to Moses..."

When Moses spoke to the burning bush and asked God what He should be called, God responded, "I AM." In other words, God's identity isn't affected by what we call Him, what we know of Him, or what we think of Him. God is who He is, regardless of who we are and our relationship to Him. He is "the Existing One." He was eternally self-existing, self-sustaining, and wholly sufficient long before He created people. Thankfully, God leverages His independence from all things for our benefit.

“Thus you shall say to the children of Israel...”

God is who He is, despite us, not because of us. However, He can also be everything we need Him to be so that we can escape the eternal consequences of our sins. Neither the confused condition of Moses nor the pitiful condition of Israel kept God from revealing Himself as “I AM” to deliver them from the bondage of Egypt. Our pitiful condition and inability to understand God don’t keep Him from revealing His glory to deliver us from the bondage of sin, death, and hell! That’s just who He is...

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MAKING
CONNECTIONS

Read the following verses and their surrounding context. Consider how these passages relate to Exodus 3:14 and describe God’s eternally self-existing and self-sustaining attributes in various ways.

Psalm 68:4, John 8:58, Hebrews 13:8

KNOWING GOD



1) Why is it important to understand that our relationship with God, or our opinions of Him, do not shape His character, nature, purposes, or promises? How should this understanding influence our trust in Him?

2) Seeing how God delivered Israel from Egypt, even using Moses who felt unworthy and unqualified, how can we be encouraged by God as The Great I AM? How does God's revelation to Moses at the burning bush, and the work He did afterward, prove that God can use anyone for anything? Understanding how Moses faced opposition in God's work, why is it important to remember that God is YAHWEH—The Great I AM?

THINK ABOUT IT...



1) Does understanding who God is, as revealed in Scripture, help us understand our identity as Christians?

2) God is the great "I AM" and remains unaffected by the state of His creation, which is entirely different from the human condition. So, would it be better for us to learn more about the One who stays constant as the source of good, right, and true, or to focus on ourselves, while easily influenced by everything around us? What practical changes can we make in our daily habits to ensure we are learning more about God from Him rather than focusing on ourselves through the corrupt and ever-changing things of the world?



DIG DEEPER

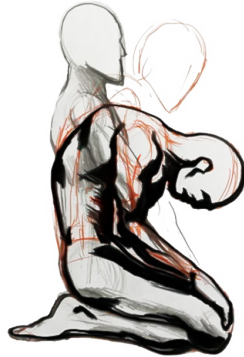
3) Reflect on Moses's testimony when he spoke to God at the burning bush compared to the work God accomplished through him. Moses felt inadequate, unprepared, and overwhelmed by God's call. God's response was, "I AM," and that was enough. God fulfilled His purpose in Moses while gradually revealing more of Himself through the work despite Moses' issues.

How does that compare to the calling God has placed on our lives? Does our opinion of ourselves guide our obedience to God, or do the scriptures? If we had to rate ourselves on a scale of 1-10, with 1 meaning a focus on self and 10 meaning a clear focus on God, where do we stand in our family lives, work or school goals, and our personal ambitions and interests? What practical steps can we take to ensure our focus remains on God's identity and His spiritual and eternal purposes centered on the salvation of others?

How can our family, school, work, or personal interests serve as opportunities for the light of the LORD, as YAHWEH, to shine through us despite our insecurities or questions?

Group Leader Notes: Try to encourage group participants to openly share their points of view about any doubts or insecurities in their faith. Leaders should open up first to set the tone for humility and transparency. James 5:16 commands us to confess our trespasses to one another to foster healing. This open, sincere, and candid dialogue displays the humility God will use to bring about that healing!

LEVELING UP



YAHWEH is...

The Great I AM

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I recognize that God is who He is, regardless of my knowledge, thoughts, or opinions about Him. Therefore, I will seek Him above all else, trusting that His revelation to me will be more valuable than anything else this world can offer. It is a privilege to know The Great I AM to any extent!

Eternally Sufficient

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I need to trust in Him more as I learn who He is. Understanding myself is only meaningful when I see who I am in Him, which requires spending enough time with Him in His Word, prayer, and in Biblical fellowship.

The Fire In The Bush

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I need to remember that Jesus was the One in the burning bush talking with Moses. His glory is like a fire that burns but doesn't destroy, making Him everything I need Him to be to serve His purposes. I will keep my eyes fixed on the miracle of His glory.

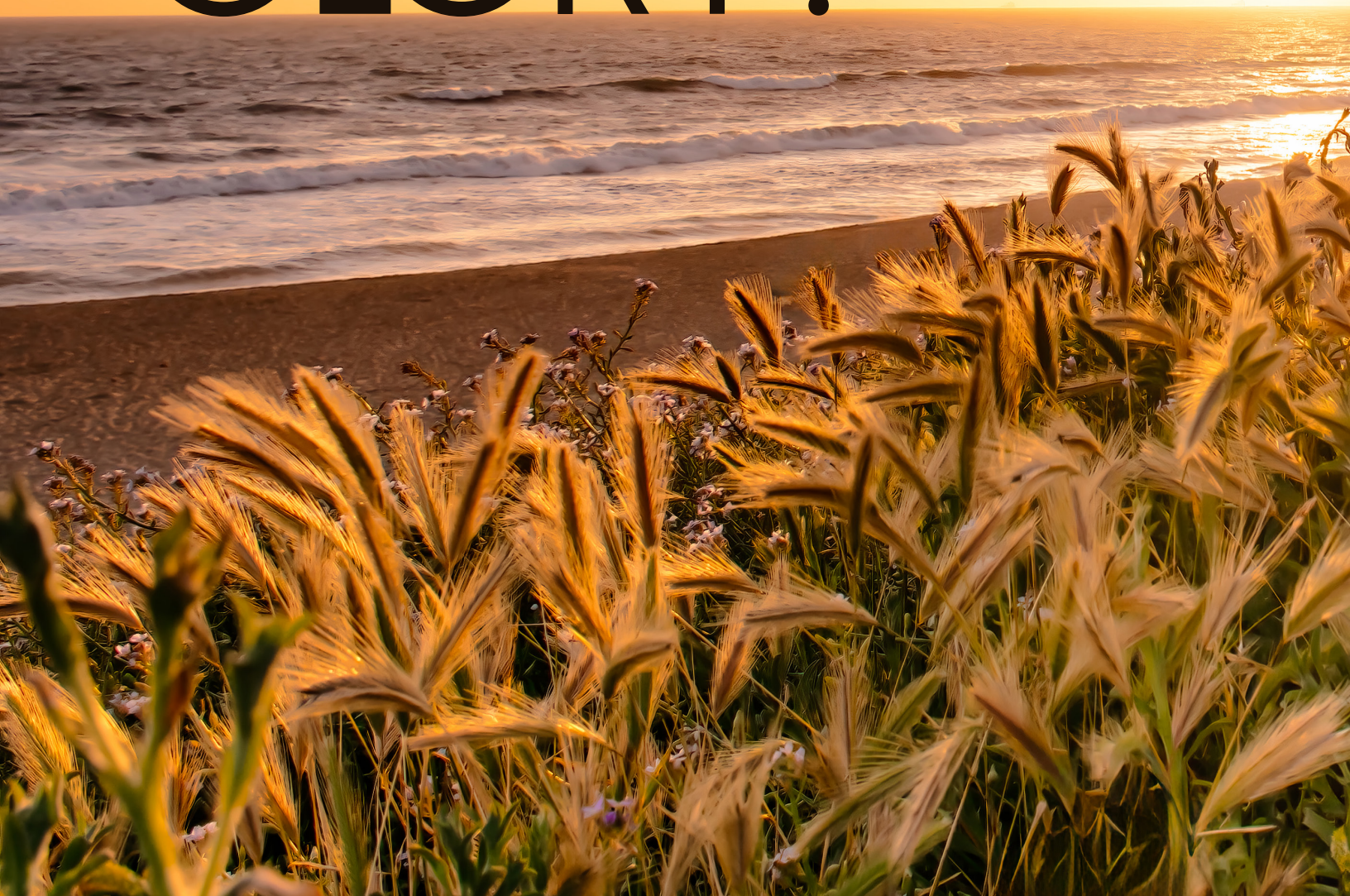
The Light of the World

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I need to surrender the things in my life that are based on selfish ambition to let the light of the LORD shine through me according to His calling on my life, regardless of my insecurities, experience, or my perception of my knowledge about God. I AM was good enough for Moses. That's good enough for me!

***Group Leader Notes:** Finish each meeting with these “resolutions” to give group members specific points to focus on through the week in light of the study material and discussions. It's also a good idea to revisit these things the following week to start conversation, discover needs for prayer, and encourage accountability.*

WEEK 3

HOW
MUCH
GLORY?

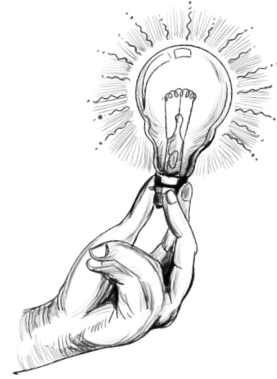


"But truly, as I live,
all the earth shall
be filled with the
glory of the LORD..."
- Numbers 14:21



GOD'S CHARACTER IN SCRIPTURE

When God said, "Let there be light," on Day 1, He manifested His essence "physically" for the first time. We relate to the physical form of God's glory by describing it as "light." Since God didn't create the sun, moon, or stars until Day 4, His glory illuminated the entire universe before anything else was created, while also keeping heaven illuminated.



Genesis Chapter 1 teaches that our entire physical plane of reality was once made up of "darkness" before God began His work of creation. When God manifested Himself as "light," that darkness vanished. The manifestation of God's glory was enough to eliminate darkness from the entire universe whenever He chose. He didn't have to exert Himself. He didn't have to build Himself up. He didn't have to rely on anything or anyone.

"But truly, as I live..."

The world today is dark. Our communities, workplaces, schools, and homes are affected by this darkness. Our hearts and minds can also be influenced by it. Numbers 14:21 gives us hope. Since God is eternally self-existing and self-sustaining, His natural glory and brightness are enough to fill the earth forever. He has already done it before sin entered the world. When God decides it's time, His glory will once again fill the universe. There will be no place for darkness anymore, whether in the world or in the minds and hearts of God's people.

"ALL the earth shall be filled..."

When will that be? According to the testimony of scripture, the 2nd Coming of Jesus Christ will be the catalyst for this promise to be fulfilled. Jesus is "the light of the world" as the physical manifestation of the Father's glory. When He comes back, He will judge the world. He will abolish sin, death, and darkness, and He will eternally condemn those who live according to those things. God alone is the One who eliminates darkness of any kind. All He has to do is reveal the true extent of His glory!

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MAKING
CONNECTIONS

Please read the following verses and their surrounding context. Consider how these passages relate to Numbers 14:21 and the many things God's infinite glory accomplishes.

Deuteronomy 32:39-41, Psalm 72:17-19, Revelation 4:9-11

KNOWING GOD

1) On the first day, God revealed His glory to manifest light, instantly removing all darkness that filled and defined the universe. When God flips that switch, He can make darkness disappear! Knowing that God is eternally self-existing and self-sustaining, He never loses that power. How might this understanding boost your confidence in Him during difficult times?



2) When the scriptures describe God's glory filling the world, it refers to a future time. This means that thousands of years have passed since God made that promise, and we are still waiting. How does God's eternal and spiritual nature help us understand the "delays" in His work? What are some things we can do to find encouragement in a world that is growing darker every day, knowing that God will remove the darkness and fill the universe with His glory? What practical steps can we take to find encouragement in the scriptures so we can keep our focus on the truth of God's Word instead of being overwhelmed by life's discouraging circumstances, knowing that God's work takes time?

THINK ABOUT IT...



1) The full story of Numbers 14:21 reveals God's glory filling the world through His forgiveness. His people saw miracles but still doubted His promises and rebelled against His standards of righteousness. God didn't punish them as they deserved; instead, He offered forgiveness.

God's glory shines through the forgiveness He gives to those who seek Him for it. Is God still offering forgiveness today, and if so, to what extent? How might this understanding change how we perceive God's glory today, even when circumstances seem dark?

2) Many people today are upset with God because of the darkness they've experienced. Many believe that God is indifferent to the evil and tragedies in our world due to their personal encounters with darkness. Israel endured four hundred years of dark oppression in Egypt before God responded with judgments to free them, fully aware of how ungrateful Israel would be. Nevertheless, God demonstrated His glory both in judging the evil against His people and in showing mercy to forgive them.

Did God ignore the sin and injustice of Egypt against Israel? Do the scriptures support the idea that God ignores evil, tragedy, and injustice? How should our understanding of God's eternal and spiritual nature shape our perception?

DIG DEEPER



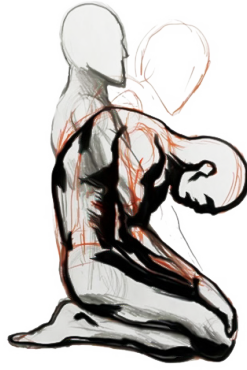
3) We've all felt disappointment from God at some point, hoping God would display His glory to rescue us from dark times, but things turned out differently. Did we trust God as the eternal, self-existing, self-sustaining God of glory, whose focus is the eternal and spiritual integrity of our souls? Did we think about the work God was doing to preserve our souls from sin, death, and hell, or were we more caught up in the difficulty and stress of the time?

God hasn't killed and condemned us for our past unbelief or attitude toward Him. How can this understanding help us see God's glory through the patience and forgiveness He has shown us and others in the world, despite the darkness in us and around us? What practical actions can we take to humbly reflect on the light of God's glory through His offer of forgiveness, so we aren't overwhelmed by discouragement in a dark world?

How might focusing on Jesus' Second Coming, when He physically fills the world with His glory, help us have a more hopeful and joyful outlook in today's dark world? How could that shift in perspective and attitude impact those around you, whether they are believers or non-believers?

Group Leader Notes: *When the subject of darkness comes up, it can be easy to focus on the negative and miss the point of God's promise to reveal His glory. Be mindful of the tone of the conversation and be sure to steer the conversation into the sureness of God's promise to remove darkness by His glory FULLY.*

LEVELING UP



YAHWEH is...

The Eternally-Minded God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I should remember that God’s promise to reveal His glory is eternally focused, meaning that He may take longer than I expect to do the things I hope He will do. The fullness of God’s glory will come when He returns. He is preparing me for eternity.

The God Of Forgiveness

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must remember that His glory is revealed in the brightness of His essence, His judgments, AND the forgiveness He freely offers to those who seek Him. I recognize that I’ve been forgiven for much and will escape His judgments; therefore, I should see God’s glory in that truth.

The Fast-Acting God of Glory

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will keep in mind that God changes things quickly when He reveals His glory! His work is swift, often happening unexpectedly, so I will look forward to the fulfillment of His promise, expecting it can come at any moment!

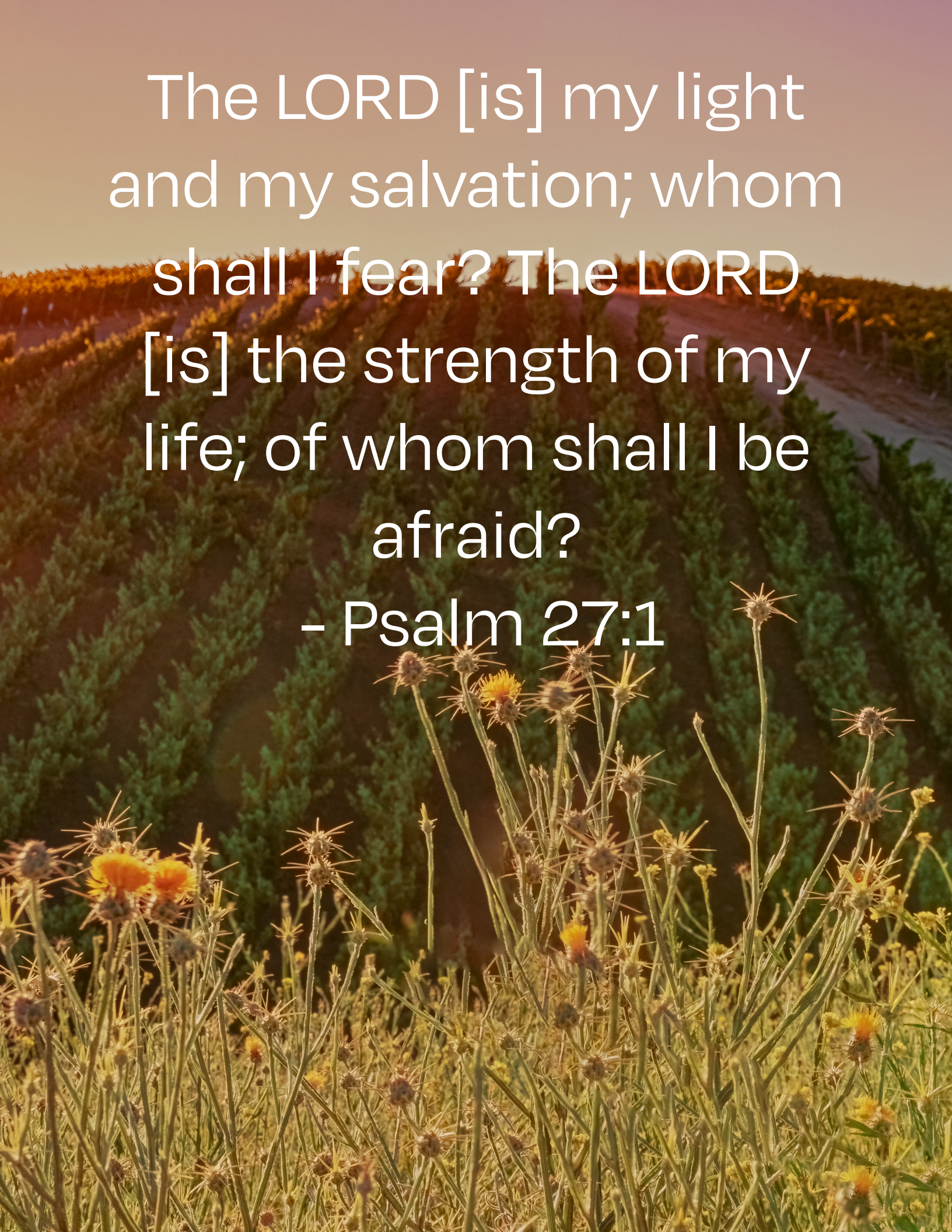
The Light of the World

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I need to remember that God’s purposes and promises will create a worldwide impact. This doesn’t mean that God is ignoring my personal issues, but that He is addressing them within His larger plans for the entire world. God’s promise to glorify His creation includes me as His new creation, born again by His Spirit through faith in the identity and work of Jesus Christ.

***Group Leader Notes:** Finish each meeting with these “resolutions” to give group members specific points to focus on through the week in light of the study material and discussions. It’s also a good idea to revisit these things the following week to start conversation, discover needs for prayer, and encourage accountability.*

A photograph of a vast field of green plants, possibly a vineyard or a field of wildflowers, under a warm, golden sky. The plants are densely packed and stretch towards the horizon. The lighting is soft and warm, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

WEEK 4
OUR
CONFIDENCE
& STRENGTH

A photograph of a field of yellow flowers, possibly a species of thistle or similar, with green foliage. The scene is bathed in a warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The text is overlaid on the upper portion of the image.

The LORD [is] my light
and my salvation; whom
shall I fear? The LORD
[is] the strength of my
life; of whom shall I be
afraid?

- Psalm 27:1

GOD'S CHARACTER IN SCRIPTURE

The Bible teaches that we can't do anything apart from God, let alone do things that please Him. As humans, we are depraved, corrupt, and condemned. Unless God breathes life into us daily, we die. We're lying to ourselves if we believe we have confidence and strength without considering God. We aren't as independent or self-sufficient as we might think...



The LORD is the strength of life, just like the Bible says. Strength doesn't come from our human nature and determination; it comes from God. God is eternally self-existing and self-sustaining. All strength and ability must arise from the effects of His glory. We must seek God's glory and provision to overcome depravity, corruption, and condemnation. Then, we can receive the benefits of His glory, being equipped with a strength that holds eternal value.

"The LORD [is] my light and my salvation..."

The LORD is "light" AND "salvation." As our "light," His glory illuminates the issues of our corrupted souls and guides us to a better path. Salvation is the destination to which He leads us. The light of His glory points to Himself since He IS salvation. Salvation from what?

Salvation from sin, death, and hell. The manifestation of God's "light" and "salvation" isn't ambiguous. In John 8:12, Jesus said that He is the "Light of the world." Jesus is "the Christ," meaning "Messiah." He is the Savior of the world. His incarnation, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and second coming serve to deliver condemned souls into the presence of the Father with the approval of His righteousness. This is how we gain strength that has lasting value.

“The LORD [is] the strength of my life...”

The kind of strength described in the Bible here is the strength to die to the depravity of our flesh in repentance. We’re talking about the strength to pick up our crosses daily to follow Jesus. We’re talking about the strength He provides through His Spirit to live according to His righteousness and holiness in a fallen and corrupted world. We’re talking about strength to be more than conquerors, succumbing to physical death but living eternally conformed to His glory anyway. What human form of strength can compare to this?

This is why we don’t have to be afraid. The scariest thing in the world—death and the inevitable facing of God in judgment—has been handled favorably on our behalf by God Himself!

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MAKING
CONNECTIONS

Read the following verses and their surrounding context. Consider how these passages relate to Psalm 27:1 and God’s role concerning darkness in our lives.

Psalm 18:25-31, Isaiah 60:1-22, Micah 7:8-9, John 1:1-5

KNOWING GOD

1) Knowing that God calls Himself our confidence and strength in the scriptures, do we go to God to navigate life in the darkness that surrounds us? Do we honestly understand how to follow the light of God's glory in practical ways? How do the scriptures explain the real work God does to provide strength in our salvation? If we can't answer these questions Biblically, what are we willing to do to seek the truth?



2) Knowing that God's name "YAHWEH" describes His eternally self-existing and self-sustaining qualities, how can that truth strengthen my confidence in the salvation He provides? Does God save His people and then leave us to handle everything on our own? What are some scriptural examples that show God provides the light of His glory to save someone and then strengthens those people to live by faith through trials and victories? How does this attribute of God connect to His identity as "our Father in heaven" or as Jesus being our "Good Shepherd"?

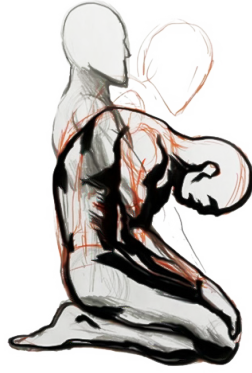
THINK ABOUT IT...

1) The declarations in Psalm 27:1 reveal that our understanding of God as our light, salvation, and strength should give us confidence in our faith, preventing fear from ruling our efforts to serve the LORD. Reflecting on the last major decision you faced, are you more motivated by fear than by the knowledge that God has overcome sin, death, and the world? Are there things you could have done differently to show more hope, confidence, and strength in Christ? How can that understanding help you handle worry or anxiety when the next challenge arises?



2) The Bible explains that since God is eternally self-existing and self-sustaining, His glory is enough to provide light and strength for our lives at all times—whether good or bad. Do our decision-making habits show a trust in God or in ourselves for wisdom and strength? What can we do to surrender control to the LORD when we still find ourselves trusting in our own “light” and “strength”? Could any worry, fear, or anxiety we experience be because we are trying to fulfill God’s role as “light” and “strength”? Read through John Chapter 17 to see how Jesus depended on the Father during His greatest moment of need.

LEVELING UP



YAHWEH is...

The Eternal Leadership Of The LORD

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will focus on the path that He illuminates, which leads to the revelation of His glory when I make decisions for myself, considering eternal and spiritual possibilities.

The Eternally-Strong God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will consider that God’s strength transcends physical ability, remembering that He aims to strengthen my soul to endure the purification of my life.

The Confidence Found In God's Glory

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will try to remember that God's glory has overcome death, so I have nothing to fear. If I'm pursuing His glory, I can trust that His glory will conquer anything and everything that threatens to separate me from Him.


The Light of My Salvation

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will trust that the quality of life God gives us in salvation is greater in magnitude and value than my current circumstances. The light of His salvation endures forever, which fuels the essence of my life in Him, and that's what matters most!

***Group Leader Notes:** Finish each meeting with these “resolutions” to give group members specific points to focus on through the week in light of the study material and discussions. It's also a good idea to revisit these things the following week to start conversation, discover needs for prayer, and encourage accountability.*

WEEK 5

THE
SOURCE
OF ALL
GOOD
THINGS



For the LORD God
[is] a sun and shield;
The LORD will give
grace and glory; No
good [thing] will He
withhold From those
who walk uprightly.

- Psalm 84:11

GOD'S CHARACTER IN SCRIPTURE

Since God is uniquely, eternally self-existing and self-sustaining, all things must come from Him. If we seek the good things that God offers, we must turn to Him to receive them because of who He is. He's the source of it all!



“For the LORD God [is] a sun and shield...”

The Bible describes God's attributes as the source of all things, especially good things. He is a sun and a shield. The LORD is “a sun,” referring to His brightness and beauty. Consider how life on our planet depends on the sun in our solar system. That's what God is to us. Reflect on the beauty of the sun when it rises and sets. That's what God is to us, too! God is the source of life, function, growth, and vibrancy. He is also the standard of beauty, goodness, and glory. All good things come from God because of who He is.

God is also our protector. The “shield” that Psalm 84:11 describes is a buckler shield. This was a small shield that soldiers used in battle to remain agile. It was useful for defending against projectiles and light enough to be used as an offensive weapon in close-quarters situations. In this sense, God protects His people from the fiery darts that infect our minds and tempt us into darkness. God utilizes those attacks to His advantage, producing good results. He deflects enemy assaults, turning evil against evil to His benefit. His defense is also our offense!

“No good [thing] will He withhold from those who walk uprightly...”

God only gives these benefits to certain people. Those who “walk uprightly” receive the benefits of God’s character. This refers to those who walk by faith in these truths. God freely grants us access to the benefits of His attributes when we believe in Him and rely on Him rather than attempting to live by personal standards to reproduce His benefits through our efforts. Do we believe what the Bible says about who God is? Do we trust that He provides these benefits? Do we depend on Him for life, purpose, function, growth, vibrancy, protection, and progress? Do we look to Jesus Christ as the object of our faith, trusting in Him as God-in-flesh? If we believe, God promises that He won’t withhold ANYTHING that He decides is good for us!

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MAKING
CONNECTIONS

Consider how these verses highlight God as the source of all good things, and how those blessings come from knowing God through His Word, from Israel, from Jesus, and ultimately lead to eternal life.

Psalm 34:8-11, Psalm 115:9-11, Isaiah 60:19-20, John 1:9-13

KNOWING GOD

1) If we are to love God, we must know Him. Then, in knowing Him as the One True God, we must trust His Word, allowing His self-revelation to shape our thoughts about Him. Do we make assumptions about who God is, or do we rely on the Bible's teachings that God is the source of all good things? Is our relationship with God based on our understanding of His eternally self-existing and self-sustaining goodness, or on our personal interpretation of "goodness"?



2) Psalm 84:11 teaches that God displays His eternally self-existing and self-sustaining glory to give good things to those who trust in Him and follow His Word. However, His promise to provide wisdom and protection seems to conflict with our reality. There is a lot of evil in the world, and many people, including Christians, suffer because of it. Does the existence of evil prove that God and His Word are false? How does understanding God's eternal and spiritual nature help us reconcile His goodness with the presence of suffering and evil in the world?

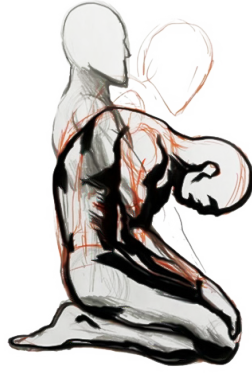
THINK ABOUT IT...

1) Since the Bible teaches that God is our "shield," how has God equipped us to stand firm in battle against our flesh, the influences of the world, and Satan himself? How does our understanding of God's eternally self-existing and self-sustaining nature strengthen our confidence in Him and the equipping He provides? What historical proof can we find in scripture that illustrates God equipping the entire nation of Israel against threats to preserve their spiritual and eternal integrity according to His covenants? How does the magnitude of God's work for Israel speak to the work He can do in our own lives?



2) Psalm 84:11 begins by saying that God is our "sun." He is the source of light, life, wisdom, and vibrancy. The sun shines on the whole planet. Considering that God is eternally self-existing and self-sustaining, is it possible for Him to withhold good things from us as His children? Is there something "good" we are missing out on because we follow Jesus and the Bible? How might our flesh, the world, or spiritual influences be affecting our faith in God's ability to provide every good thing, causing us to doubt Him and pursue lies like Eve did in the Garden of Eden?

LEVELING UP



YAHWEH is...

The Goodness Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must remember that He is the source of all good things. If I am pursuing something good for my life or the lives of others, I will ensure it aligns with Jesus’ standards of “good” as defined in scripture.

The Spiritual Protection Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will trust that God’s eternally self-existing and self-sustaining nature uniquely qualifies Him to make sure my soul is sufficiently protected from the evils that He will condemn – and THAT is the most essential thing in life!

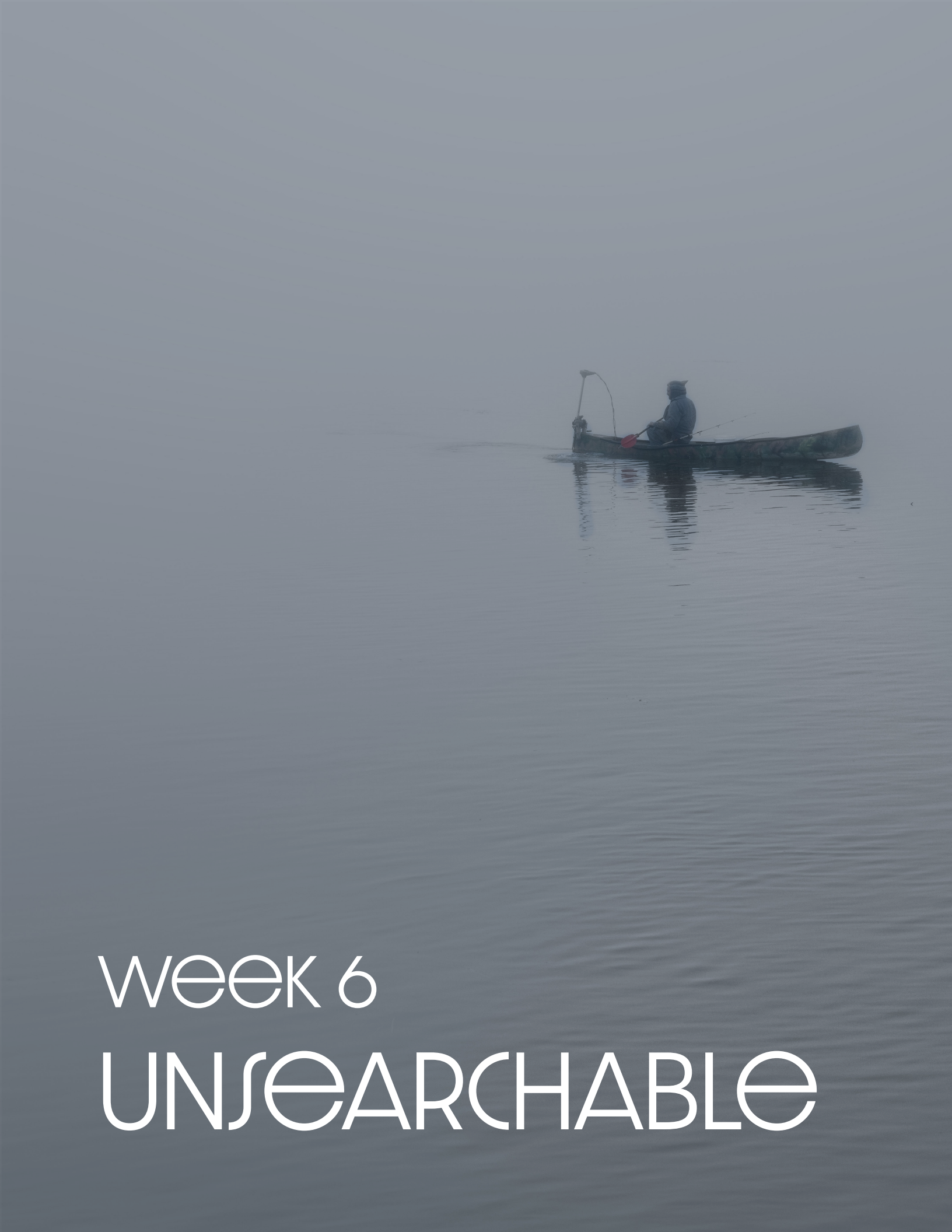
The Infinite Glory Of God's Grace

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will remember that God doesn't want to restrict me from good. He wants to overwhelm me with it! I will trust in the integrity of His faithfulness to fulfill His desire in my life, rather than my performance to earn His favor.

The Light Of The Son

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I can live with encouragement and hope today, thinking about the brightness of the sun, the heat that comes from it, considering all of the benefits that it provides for the whole planet, remembering that the glory of Jesus Christ is immeasurably greater!

***Group Leader Notes:** Finish each meeting with these “resolutions” to give group members specific points to focus on through the week in light of the study material and discussions. It's also a good idea to revisit these things the following week to start conversation, discover needs for prayer, and encourage accountability.*



WEEK 6

UNSEARCHABLE

Have you not known?

Have you not heard?

The everlasting
God, the LORD, The
Creator of the ends
of the earth, neither
faints nor is weary.
His understanding is
unsearchable.

- Isaiah 40:28

GOD'S CHARACTER IN SCRIPTURE



There's much about God that's impossible to comprehend. He is not like us; He is eternal, while we are mortal. He is self-existing, whereas we were created. He is self-sustaining, and we depend on His provision. In these ways, we are contrary to God. We have never experienced eternity, purity, glory, or true goodness.

"Have you not known..."

God has provided incredible revelations about His attributes in the Bible. Without it, we're left in the dark about most things. Yet, with the complete counsel of scripture and the guidance of the Holy Spirit as our Helper, we still cannot fully grasp the full magnitude of God's essence and the supremacy of His majesty. We still have a LONG way to go.

*"The everlasting God, the
LORD, The Creator of the
ends of the earth..."*

It should be common knowledge that the God of the Bible is the Creator of the universe. According to the Bible, EVERYONE has some understanding of God's eternal nature as the Creator. Anyone, at any point in human history, can look up at the sky, see the sun, moon, and stars, and realize that God existed before the things that He made. The countless grains of sand and stars in the sky testify to God's infinite nature. All people know this, whether they admit it or not. God's creation bears witness to His eternal power and Godhead.

"His understanding is unsearchable..."

Following that thought to the next point, we can learn about God's unchanging and self-sustaining power. God had the power to create everything "in the beginning." It's all still working. How long can you drive a car before it runs out of gas? How long will a machine operate before it starts to break down? How long can a human being keep functioning at a constant rate of movement? According to the timeline of scripture, God has sustained the function of the universe for the last 6,000 to 7,000 years (approximately)! If God were tired, wouldn't things slow down? If God were weak, wouldn't we see major breakdowns in the system? The ongoing function of God's creation is a testament to His power and faithfulness in using creation however necessary to fulfill His covenants and promises.

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MAKING
CONNECTIONS

Read the following passages and consider how these verses describe God's eternal and spiritual focus on judging evil, and how He has always maintained that focus, making Him the only one who can save the soul from sin, death, and hell. Also, reflect on the role His Word plays in our understanding of Him and His purposes.

1 Samuel 2:10, Isaiah 45:22, Jeremiah 10:10, John 5:17, 1 Corinthians 2:13-16

KNOWING GOD

1) Hold your breath for two minutes. Can you do it? Does your body gasp for air afterward? Do ten jumping jacks. Does your heart rate and breathing increase? God doesn't respond this way. He doesn't get tired—ever! Now, consider the testimony of Elijah and the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18:20-40. How does God compare to human-made ideas and philosophies of the world? Could a made-up god do anything after all the effort the prophets exerted? How did God's response prove that His power and wisdom to create and act according to His Word haven't diminished even a little?



2) Read Isaiah 55:8-9 and Romans 11:33-36. How do these truths connect to Isaiah 40:28 to emphasize the greatness of God's eternally self-existing and self-sustaining glory? Since Isaiah 40:28 asks the questions, "Have you not known? Have you not heard?" list three clear and obvious examples of God's identity as the Creator that anyone can observe on earth. In light of those examples, what distinguishes God as the Creator from His creation, including humans?

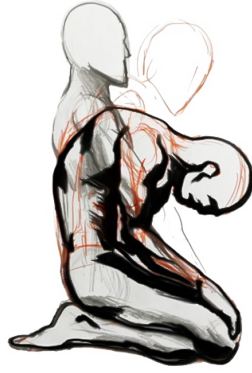
THINK ABOUT IT...



1) Even though the scriptures teach that we'll never fully understand God, how often do we try to do so anyway? How often do we imagine the details of how God will work in our lives? What happens when we can't understand Him? Does it cause us to doubt Him? What are some practical steps we can take or things we can pray about to help address these questions?

2) The Bible is God's eternal Word. It's always true and always relevant. Isaiah 40:28 begins by stating how the whole world should know that God is the Creator. When examining the testimonies of Scripture, it can seem like God was more evident then than He is now, almost as if He's hidden. Since God is the eternally self-existing and self-sustaining light of the world, is it possible for God to be "hidden"? Is it possible that we're missing out on the evidence of God's work because of unbelief? How can our understanding of God's covenants with Israel, His work in Israel's past, and their current state, enrich our faith in God's "unsearchable understanding"?

LEVELING UP



YAHWEH is...

The Infinite Nature Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must remember that I am not like Him! When the temptation arises for me to feel like I know more than I do, I will remember the incomprehensible nature of Jesus Christ and the complexity of His work to save souls from sin, death, and hell.

The Revelation Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will rely on the specific and true revelation He has given to know what can be known of Him. To know God, I will rely on His Word and the Holy Spirit to understand it. I will trust that Word is enough. I will also trust that the understanding God has given me today is sufficient to serve His purposes today, regardless of how much I don't know.

The Creativity Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will consider that God created everything from nothing. Thinking about the complexity and diversity of the universe, I will trust that God has dynamic ways to address my needs, that I’ll likely never understand fully.

The Brightness Of His Understanding

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will remember that, as much as I can’t look directly into the intense light of the sun, I can’t look directly into the glory of God, much less understand it. Knowing His glory is the source of all things, I’ll trust that He has me covered for the things that matter most to Him, whether I understand how or not.


***Group Leader Notes:** Finish each meeting with these “resolutions” to give group members specific points to focus on through the week in light of the study material and discussions. It’s also a good idea to revisit these things the following week to start conversation, discover needs for prayer, and encourage accountability.*



week 7

THE FIRST

& THE LAST



"Thus says the
LORD, the King
of Israel, and his
Redeemer, the
LORD of hosts: 'I
[am] the First and
I [am] the Last;
besides Me [there
is] no God.'"
- Isaiah 44:6

GOD'S CHARACTER IN SCRIPTURE



By definition, God is uniquely eternal, self-existing, and self-sustaining, making Him "the First and the Last." God has no creator; nothing existed before Him. God isn't dependent on anything to exist or to be satisfied within Himself. He is the First and the cause of all things in our physical universe and the eternal realm. He is the Last; nothing will outlast Him, and nothing will exist beyond Him. He has no end! Since He is self-sustaining, He doesn't change.

*"Thus says the LORD, the
King of Israel..."*

God teaches us these truths by revealing Himself as King, Redeemer, and the LORD of hosts. The Great I AM is the King of the nation of Israel. God decided to make His glory known through the conduit of Israel and the eternally unconditional covenants He made with them. God explains that He will manifest Himself as Israel's king, referring to Israel's Messiah (Christ in New Testament terms). The Father will express His eternally self-existing and self-sustaining nature through His work as the LORD of armies in heaven and on earth, leveraging Israel as His primary instrument. The "First and the Last" manifests the glory of His authority, power, and sovereignty through His covenants with the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; there is no other. God said so Himself...

"And His Redeemer, the LORD of hosts..."

Also, note that God is the Redeemer of Israel and the world. God redeemed Israel from the bondage of Egypt with great signs and miracles. The Bible promises that God will continue this work of redemption to make Israel a great nation, dwelling safely in the land inheritance He provides for them, to bless all the families of the earth while ruling in this world as Israel's King.

Redemption from what? Redemption from the controlling influence of Israel's enemies—both physical and spiritual. Redemption from the controlling influence of sin. Redemption from the eternal consequences of death and hell. The prophecy of Isaiah promises that God will reveal His eternally unchanging power and glory by purchasing His people to take as His possession, where they can serve His eternally glorious purposes, submitting to Him as King. This is who God is. This is what He will do. There is no other God, so there is no greater purpose.

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MAKING
CONNECTIONS

Think about how God connects these ideas in these passages: He is the eternally self-existing and self-sustaining Creator, the King of Israel, and Redeemer. Consider the importance of God's glory as the Creator and the relationship He has with the world through His eternally unconditional covenants with Israel.

Isaiah 33:20-22, Isaiah 43:13-15, Matthew 25:34, Matthew 27:37

KNOWING GOD

1) God identified Himself as the one and only true God as "the First and the Last," specifically calling Himself the "King of Israel." Clearly, God's identity as YAHWEH is closely connected to His relationship with the nation of Israel. Reflecting on Israel's history, starting with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, how did God demonstrate His power as Creator in forming a nation? Did God choose Israel, or did Israel choose Him? What other qualities and abilities has God shown through His work to create, establish, and preserve Israel over the years? List examples from scripture and compare them to Israel's current state.



2) When God called Himself the King of Israel, He also described Himself as the Redeemer. This applies to both the nation of Israel and all believers. How does God's redemption connect to Israel and His covenants with them (see Genesis 12:1-3)? How does God's redemption relate to us as believers? What is God redeeming us from, and what is He redeeming us for? Considering God's relationship with Israel as the prototype for our redemption, what role do we play in redemption?

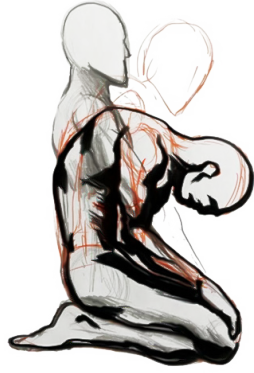
THINK ABOUT IT...

1) Since God is the First and the Last, He is not limited by anything. He exists forever, being self-sufficient and eternal, which makes Him immortal. We are mortal. How do the limits of our mortality help us understand the greatness of God's glory outside of human time? What are some areas in our lives where time works against us? How do those circumstances affect our attitude, relationships, finances, or goals? Knowing that God isn't affected this way, what does that say about Him, His power, and His wisdom?



2) God is called the King of Israel. What is your worldview regarding Israel? Is it shaped by scripture and God's promises, or by opinions from modern media outlets? God is called the Redeemer. Do we believe that Jesus bought our souls with His blood as payment, and do we genuinely believe He will bring us into His presence to receive us someday soon? Do our daily decisions reflect this eternal perspective?

LEVELING UP



YAHWEH is...

The Sufficiency Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will remember the nature of God to ensure I am sufficient with Him. He has always been enough in Himself, yet called me to share in His eternally self-existing and self-sustaining glory. If God is enough for Himself, He is enough for me also!

The God of Israel

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I do my best to consider the Jewish nature of scripture to remember God’s covenants and faithfulness to Israel. Our Savior is the King of Israel, and I can find encouragement by knowing and recognizing the unique testimony of Israel found in scripture compared to current events.

The Glory Of God's Redemption

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I should consider the testimony of Israel in scripture to understand how God redeems His people. I need to remember that the hope and encouragement I often crave are found in the details of God's promises and purposes with the nation of Israel documented in His Word.

The Light At The End Of The Tunnel


To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must remember that Jesus pours out His goodness through His redemption, which is centered on the sufficiency of His work to preserve my soul from sin, death, and hell. Though it may be hard to imagine glory during times of difficulty, I will remember that I am already God's purchased possession because of Jesus' sacrifice. Nothing matters more.

***Group Leader Notes:** Finish each meeting with these “resolutions” to give group members specific points to focus on through the week in light of the study material and discussions. It's also a good idea to revisit these things the following week to start conversation, discover needs for prayer, and encourage accountability.*



week 8

DID GOD
CREATE
DARKNESS?



"I form the light and
create darkness, I
make peace and
create calamity; I, the
LORD, do all these
[things]."
- Isaiah 45:7

GOD'S CHARACTER IN SCRIPTURE

Life can seem like it's out of control. That's because things in life are out of our control, not God's control. Things can't literally be "out of control." When we understand the nature of God as Creator and recognize the extent of His glory, it's impossible to conclude that things are beyond His control. We often live as if there are things God didn't account for. Sometimes, we act like God has to scramble to address situations that suddenly spring up on us. It doesn't work that way.



"I form the light..."

Scripture teaches that God is light, and there is no darkness of any kind in Him. Clearly, God is the One who created the physical light we see in the world today. This raises the question: Where did darkness come from? Where did the characteristics and consequences of darkness originate?

"And create darkness..."

Isaiah 45:7 states that God created darkness! It can be difficult for people to understand that truth. Some people feel they must apologize on God's behalf because of this issue. When we consider how God speaks in Isaiah Chapter 45, there is no shame from Him when declaring this truth. So why should we feel ashamed?

"I make peace and create calamity; I, the LORD, do all these [things]..."

God controls all things He made just as a potter controls the objects they shape and form. This includes darkness and everything associated with it. If it's part of God's creation, He is aware of it, governs it, and has a spiritually-centered purpose for it. While things may appear chaotic and confusing from our perspective, this is never the case from God's viewpoint. Since He wields power over everything – even the aspects of darkness – He can create any outcome He desires at any time. Because God always acts according to His perfect standards, which are good and right, we have no reason to worry, regardless of how dark things may seem. We must remember that the One who is Light created darkness for a reason. His purposes and the methods of His work are far too great and glorious for our minds to grasp! So, do we trust that He will do the right thing with everything He's made?

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MAKING
CONNECTIONS

Read the following passages to gain a deeper understanding of God's eternally self-existing and self-sustaining power to create any situation for judging darkness with righteousness, using darkness.

Exodus 10:21-23, Jeremiah 13:16, Joel 2:1-2, Amos 4:13, Jude 1:6

KNOWING GOD

1) One of the most challenging things to accept about God is the capacity of His power to create and control everything, including "darkness." When thinking about Isaiah 45:7, does God control natural events, calamity, misfortune, adversity, affliction, or disaster? Is God the one who brings both good AND bad times, or do those things happen by chance?



2) The Bible teaches that God is light and there is no darkness in Him at all (1 John 1:5). It also shows that God does not tempt people to do evil. However, the scripture explains that God can manifest and control "darkness" and "calamity." For example, God created the devil, knowing He would rebel. He also created the serpent that the devil inhabited in the Garden of Eden, yet He called it "good" on the sixth day. Is it possible for God to use wickedness for something good? List three examples in scripture where God allowed difficult circumstances for His people but ultimately brought about a good and righteous result. How can God's ability to "create darkness" actually encourage us during dark times?

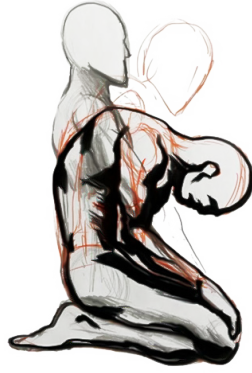
THINK ABOUT IT...

1) One of the easiest places to see darkness in the world is in government. Does God use people in positions of authority as agents of peace? Does God use people in positions of authority as agents of calamity? Find three examples where God used kings or other types of rulers as agents of darkness and light – whether Jew or Gentile. What does that say about God's control over our current political situation?



2) How do we really feel about the idea that God can manifest darkness into our lives at any time for purposes that we may not understand? Can God use darkness for something good? Can God use wickedness for something glorious? Does our opinion about darkness and calamity affect God's ability to "work all things together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose?" Does our understanding of God's use of darkness affect the integrity and faithfulness of God to take care of our souls? How might our attitudes about these things affect our witness towards others?

LEVELING UP



YAHWEH is...

The Control Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will remember that since God is eternally self-existing and self-sustaining, He always has complete control over the cause and effect of all things, whether I understand it or accept it. I will trust that God is proactively involved in my life at all times to fulfill the promises of eternal life found in the Word.

The Author Of All Good

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will remember that all good things come from God, and since He is eternally self-existing and self-sustaining, He is never unable to do the good things He promised.

The Glory That Destroys Darkness

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will remember that God created darkness for a purpose, and that purpose doesn't compromise my position with Him as His child. Since God is the Creator, He is in control of all the dark times in life, which guarantees that His glory will eventually make it seem like it never existed!

The Light Of God's Peace

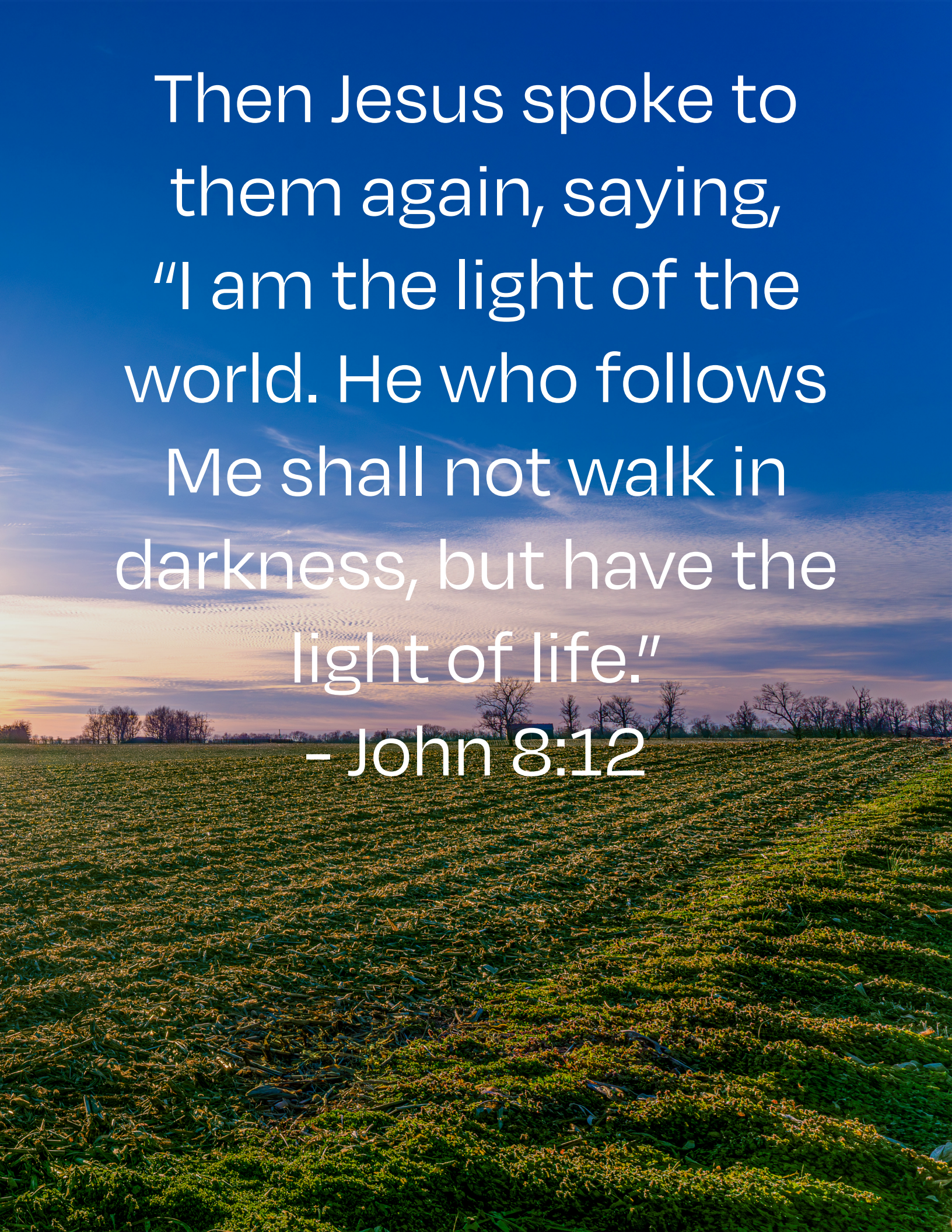
To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must remember that God's purposes for darkness exceed my understanding, but that doesn't change His nature. To find peace amid difficulty, I will remember that God ALWAYS uses calamity to produce blessings for His faithful followers.

***Group Leader Notes:** Finish each meeting with these “resolutions” to give group members specific points to focus on through the week in light of the study material and discussions. It's also a good idea to revisit these things the following week to start conversation, discover needs for prayer, and encourage accountability.*

WEEK 9

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD



A landscape photograph of a green field under a blue sky with a sunset or sunrise glow. The text is overlaid on the image.

Then Jesus spoke to
them again, saying,
"I am the light of the
world. He who follows
Me shall not walk in
darkness, but have the
light of life."

- John 8:12

GOD'S CHARACTER IN SCRIPTURE

In the beginning, God revealed the truth of His identity when He said, "Let there be light." He is the essence of light: glory, wisdom, direction, and truth. God spoke, and His Word caused a physical miracle – the manifestation of physical light. God was the source of it. That light was sufficient to illuminate the entire universe! Since God is eternally self-existing and self-sustaining, this is easy for Him to do. That will remain true forever.



"I am the light of the world..."

Since that first day, the universe has continued to emit light. The sun still shines, the moon still reflects, and the stars still glow. This shows that after all this time, God doesn't change. When Jesus came into the world as God incarnate, He came to display the glory of the Father by sharing the essence of His wisdom, direction, righteousness, and life. In John 8:12, Jesus entered the temple complex during the Feast of Tabernacles, and while standing in front of one of the candelabras in the Court of Women, He proclaimed that He is "the light of the world." These giant candles were said to be so bright that they illuminated the whole town when lit at night. Jesus stood among those candles and declared He was the world's light! His glory was even brighter than those lamps that lit up the whole city!

"He who follows Me..."

In that statement, Jesus also taught that He is the physical manifestation of the Father's declaration. He is not just One who provides enlightenment. Jesus is the physical manifestation of God's glory! Jesus is how people can escape the darkness of sin, death, and hell. Jesus is the revelation of glory, wisdom, direction, and truth, serving as the exclusive path that leads to the goodness of God. When Jesus called Himself "the light of the world," He claimed to be God and offered the benefits He came to give as God in the flesh.

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MAKING
CONNECTIONS

Reflect on how these verses that describe God as light distinguish Him as the uniquely transcendent, one, true, living Creator and Controller of all things, whose glory surpasses all understanding, especially when compared to humanity.

Isaiah 9:2, Luke 2:30-32, John 3:19

KNOWING GOD

1) When Jesus declared that He is “the light of the world,” He identified Himself as the God of glory. However, that was difficult for people to understand at the time, and even today, because Jesus’ appearance didn’t seem to illuminate the world then, nor does it now. That raises the question about our faith in who God is, and Jesus’ statement when He proclaimed to be God as “the light of the world”:



Is God a sufficient source of light? Is our understanding of God as “the light of the world” based on what we can see, or what the Bible says? When Jesus called Himself light, was He talking about something visible or about who He is? What’s the difference?

2) In John 6:37, Jesus said, “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.” If Jesus is the light of the world, why doesn’t the whole world follow Him? Does this mean that we can’t see Jesus as “the light of the world” unless the Father gives us over to Him? What does that mean about our natural ability to perceive “light” in God’s terms? How then does that affect our ability to understand God’s eternally self-existing and self-sustaining glory?

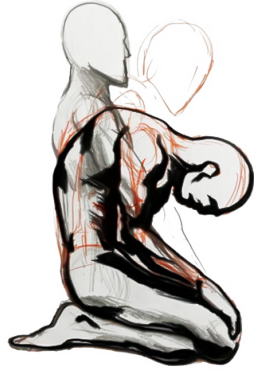
THINK ABOUT IT...

1) Jesus explained that those who follow Him and believe that He is the light of the world are entitled to certain benefits—the light of life. Following Jesus means we need to stop following something else that He describes as darkness in comparison. When we consider this contrast in direction and worldview, what does it mean to “walk in darkness” compared to “following” Jesus? How does this influence our understanding of what our Christian “walk” should look like?



2) Jesus promised that those who follow Him, trusting that He is the light of the world, will receive “the light of life.” When do we receive the light of life? Is it something we should expect now as a believer, or should we look forward to it in the future? Does the “light of life” refer to the quantity of life or the quality of life?

LEVELING UP



YAHWEH is...

The Light Since The Beginning

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will remember that Jesus is God. The power He has today to provide me with wisdom, truth, direction, and purpose is the same as it was on the first day of creation when He illuminated the whole universe.

The Greatness Of God’s Light

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will remember that the universe has been sufficiently lit long before I was born. Even though Jesus has been the light of the world since the beginning, clearly, He isn’t losing any intensity or brilliance.

The Divinely Human God Of Glory

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I understand that Jesus is God incarnate. He knows what it is to be human. He understands all of the ups and downs of our lives. I will remember that He knows what I’m going through and knows how to ensure it results in glory, no matter what.

The Light Of The World

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I need to consider that Jesus’ purpose is to illuminate the whole planet with His glory, not just my circumstances. It’s exciting to know that His purpose in my life can have a global impact somehow!

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WEEK 10

KNOWING

THE GLORY

OF GOD

For it is the God who
commanded light to
shine out of darkness,
who has shone in our
hearts to [give] the
light of the knowledge
of the glory of God
in the face of Jesus
Christ.

- 2 Corinthians 4:6

GOD'S CHARACTER IN SCRIPTURE



The Bible promises that Jesus will return to the world in full glory and subdue all things to Himself. At that time, everyone will know who Jesus is, so every knee will bow in subjection, confessing the truth of His supreme glory as YAHWEH. We don't have to wait until then to know the goodness of God's glory for our benefit. How do we gain access to that knowledge now?

*"For it is the God who
commanded light to shine..."*

In 2 Corinthians 4:6, the Apostle Paul wrote that God commanded light to shine out of darkness, referencing the miracle God performed in Genesis 1:4. He likened that miracle to the miracle of being "born again." Before coming to faith, our souls were dead and separated from God, engulfed in darkness. Our salvation is rooted in the same kind of miracle that God worked when He first said, "Let there be light!"

*"Who has shone in our hearts
to [give] the light..."*

How did our salvation come to us? The same glory that was revealed when God spoke the universe into existence took the form of a human who ultimately died for our sins. According to the Bible, we have come to know and believe that truth because of God. Just as God commanded the light to shine on Day 1, He commanded the glory of Jesus to dwell in our hearts, illuminating the darkness that once ruled over us. It wasn't our desire to know Him. It wasn't our talents. It wasn't our intelligence. It wasn't even our faith. The Bible says that it was the One "who has shone in our hearts."

“In the face of Jesus Christ...”

God provides us with the knowledge of His glory that saves us from sin, death, and hell because of His mercy. His mercy was physically embodied through “the face of Jesus Christ.” When the Bible refers to Jesus’ “face,” it speaks of the glory of His character that can be seen. How can we grasp the glory of Jesus practically and tangibly? The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible! God will illuminate our hearts through the proper handling of the Word when we seek to know His character through the Good News He’s provided of Himself. We don’t need to know the words and sayings of others. We shouldn’t seek worldly counsel or information developed by people living in darkness. If the knowledge of God’s glory is in the face of Jesus, we need to recognize what His face looks like, as revealed in the words He gave about Himself.

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MAKING
CONNECTIONS

Consider the following verses and how they highlight the idea of God’s eternally self-existing and self-sustaining glory, granting Him all authority to do whatever He pleases at all times, including the freedom to reveal His glory to whoever and however He chooses.

Exodus 34:5-7, Psalm 74:16, Ephesians 1:15-21

KNOWING GOD

1) The Bible starts with the testimony of God creating the physical universe by the power of His Word. In 2 Corinthians 4:6, the Apostle Paul describes God's work of salvation in the same way. God speaks, and His Word changes the condition of our hearts from dark to light. Jesus taught that for our souls to be saved from sin, death, and hell, we must be born again.



How is God's identity as the Creator and Commander closely connected to the miracle of being born again? When considering the authority of God's Word as described in 2 Corinthians 4:6, how does God's creative work in the beginning prove that our works cannot save us?

2) The testimony of 2 Corinthians 4:6 explains that our knowledge of Jesus Christ and the glory of the Father comes from His command. In John 3:11-12, Jesus explained that the salvation of the soul is a "heavenly" dynamic. How do these two ideas show that true Christian faith is the work of God's mercy and grace, despite our natural condition? How does this thought elevate God's grace and the eternally self-existing and self-sustaining nature of His glory?

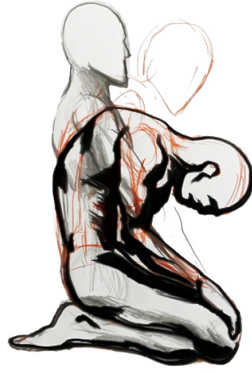
THINK ABOUT IT...

1) Why is it important to understand the Biblical definition of sin and God's holiness to fully appreciate the authority God has as Creator to give our souls life and purpose? Do all religions teach about sin? Do all Christian churches teach the truth about sin? What does that say about these "religious" approaches to God? How can we believe in the glory of God that shines in the face of Jesus if we don't understand the darkness in our hearts that God is removing? How might this truth influence our approach to scripture going forward?



2) If God exercises His authority as Creator to "command" His light to illuminate our darkened hearts, what happens if we ignore or reject His command? Since the Bible shows how God exercises His authority as the Creator to change the condition of dark souls, how does that justify God's punishment against those whose hearts remain dark? Read Romans 1:20-32. How are people rejecting God's authority, exchanging the truth about God for the lie? Have we created our own "gods" to worship while rebelling against the revelation of God's glory in our lives? What might those "gods" be?

LEVELING UP



YAHWEH is...

The Eternal Knowledge Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must remember that He is eternal, which means I must learn to know Him through the eternal tools He’s provided, centered on His Word. I will seek the knowledge of God by faith in His Word, looking for the truth of Jesus from cover to cover.

The Spiritually Sustaining Power Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must remember that His calling upon my life and the indwelling of His Spirit are the only reasons my soul is alive and my life has meaningful purpose. Just as God’s command to bring forth light changed the universe, faith in God’s Word changes lives forever, including my own.

The Spark Of God's Glory

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must remember that my salvation is based on the work that God initiated by His grace. He implanted His glory in me. I will trust that the works of my salvation to serve God are just as dependent on Him as the foundation of my salvation.

The Light Of The WORD


To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must trust that the only way to know God is to trust Him as God in the flesh. I will display that faith by seeking to know Him through the entirety of scripture.

***Group Leader Notes:** Finish each meeting with these “resolutions” to give group members specific points to focus on through the week in light of the study material and discussions. It's also a good idea to revisit these things the following week to start conversation, discover needs for prayer, and encourage accountability.*

The background is a vibrant, abstract composition of blue and purple hues. A large, glowing circular shape, resembling a lens or a portal, is the central focus. The light within this circle is a mix of deep blues and purples, with some brighter, more saturated areas. To the right, a bright, starburst-like light source creates a lens flare effect, casting a glow across the scene. The overall texture is ethereal and futuristic.

WEEK 11

UN
APP
ROACH
ABLE



Who alone has
immortality, dwelling
in unapproachable
light, whom no man
has seen or can see,
to whom [be] honor
and everlasting power.

Amen.

- 1 Timothy 6:16

GOD'S CHARACTER IN SCRIPTURE



Consider this simple truth: Traveling to the moon in ordinary clothing is impossible. You can't go to space in street clothes. Our current human condition prevents us from traveling to such places without specialized equipment. If this holds for something as basic as the places we can see, how much truer is it regarding the kingdom of God, which is unseen?

How about this truth: Looking directly at the sun without protection is dangerous. Some flashlights can be harmful to your eyes. Looking at the light on your phone can be uncomfortable if it's too close. Yet God's glory is infinitely brighter than all those things, including the sun. Can you see the problem here?

*"Who alone has immortality,
dwelling in..."*

God has provided ample evidence of our human weakness to show that we have significant issues connecting with Him and approaching Him in our natural state. God is the only one who possesses immortality. How can something mortal dwell in an eternal realm under such conditions? God is light, and there is no darkness in Him. The brilliance of His glory is one of many aspects that reflect His holiness. He transcends everything in heaven and on earth. NO ONE can freely approach the Great I AM as if we are able or entitled!

This is the problem that the depravity of our souls causes. God is the source of life, but our natural condition keeps us from approaching Him and the benefits that come exclusively from Him, including life. If not for Jesus' sacrifice as God in the flesh, the glory of God would remain unapproachable, keeping us separated from God and the quality of life that He provides. Only God, who is glorious, can allow people to dwell in His glory. If we can't approach God's essence as light in our natural condition, we don't measure up to Him.

"To whom [be] honor and everlasting power..."

Thankfully, God has offered a way. Jesus proved His immortality, and because He is God, He possesses the authority to share the benefits of His unique attributes. We can approach the unapproachable God because of Jesus' work on our behalf AS GOD! When we believe in the testimony of His Word concerning His identity, what He has done, and what He will do, we gain access to His glory, immortality, honor, and power. Without faith in the truth of Jesus, God remains unapproachable, leaving only eternal darkness in the lake of fire as an alternative.

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MAKING
CONNECTIONS

Read the following verses to see how the scriptures continually emphasize the eternally self-existing, self-sustaining glory of God, who is supremely exalted above all that He made, through Jesus Christ.

Exodus 3:14, Psalm 90:2, Isaiah 57:15, John 8:58, Hebrews 13:8, Revelation 1:8

KNOWING GOD



1) Reflect on some personal limitations that restrict you from certain opportunities or lead to disappointment. Can you control these factors? If yes, why haven't you addressed them to make improvements? If no, how does that make you feel?

Now apply that concept to the ability needed to approach God. What prevents you from approaching God? If the Bible teaches that our sinful nature makes us enemies of God, how can we freely approach God to receive His good gifts? If we have been born again and have the Holy Spirit, how do the limitations of our flesh keep us distant from God right now? What can we do about that, and how should that make us feel?

2) Even though God dwells in unapproachable light and we live in a fallen world, is there still a way to benefit from God as light? How does the Bible describe the benefits available to us right now? List five promises from scripture that show how God's eternally self-existing and self-sustaining glory surpasses the weaknesses and limitations of our flesh to give us purpose, hope, and satisfying joy. How do these promises highlight the glory of God's mercy and grace?

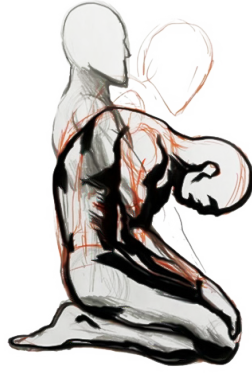
THINK ABOUT IT...

1) The scriptures clearly teach that, without supernatural mediation and connection, no one can approach God. Do we really consider the eternally self-existing and self-sustaining, unapproachable glory of God, or do we generally feel entitled to connect with God freely? Romans 10:17 teaches that saving faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. Does our consideration of God's glory push us to depend on our connection to Him through the Word, or is our relationship with the Bible a factor that requires improvement?



2) Do we truly accept the testimony of God's unapproachable glory so that we desperately depend on Jesus Christ to access the Father, or is it possible that our dependence on Jesus Christ is merely "lukewarm" at best? What practical steps can we take to strengthen our relationship with God, knowing that we don't deserve one with Him and are not qualified to build it on our own ability? Have we genuinely trusted in Jesus as our Savior from sin, death, and hell, recognizing that He's our only hope for our sins to be forgiven so we can have a meaningful connection with the Father?

LEVELING UP



YAHWEH is...

A Problem For Human Nature

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I should never forget that I have no business being able to approach Him, pray to Him, or fellowship with Him. I will do my best to humble myself and express the utmost gratitude today for the privileges He’s given that I don’t deserve.

The Immortal God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will focus on His immortal nature and perspective. The work He must do to conform me into His nature is beyond my ability, but He is able and faithful.

The Unapproachable Light

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will remember that Jesus must allow me and enable me to dwell in the presence of His glory, and if He doesn't, the alternative is hellfire. I will try to express the utmost gratitude that Jesus has already made the way!

The One Deserving Of Honor

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will focus my thoughts and intentions on giving thanks, praise, and honor to Jesus for the work He's done and will continue to do to save me from sin, death, and hell, and to bring me into His presence someday soon.


***Group Leader Notes:** Finish each meeting with these “resolutions” to give group members specific points to focus on through the week in light of the study material and discussions. It's also a good idea to revisit these things the following week to start conversation, discover needs for prayer, and encourage accountability.*

WEEK 12

THE ONE

TRUE LIGHT





The city had no need
of the sun or of the
moon to shine in it,
for the glory of God
illuminated it. The
Lamb [is] its light.
- Revelation 21:23

GOD'S CHARACTER IN SCRIPTURE

In the beginning, God said, "Let there be light," and there was light four days before God created the sun, moon, and stars! The essence of light does not originate from these celestial objects. The sun, moon, and stars radiate brightness because of God's eternally self-existing and self-sustaining glory.



This was true in the beginning, is true today, and according to Revelation 21:23, will be proven true publicly for all to see in the future. The Book of Revelation states that God will judge the ungodly, condemning them to the lake of fire for all eternity. Once God removes sin, corruption, and the remnants of darkness, He will create a new heaven, a new earth, and a new Jerusalem. Jesus will be the One to illuminate His new creation forever!

"The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it..."

The sun, moon, and stars bring light to our world today because that's God's current purpose. When His purpose is fulfilled, He won't use them anymore. Then, EVERYONE will know where the light of our world has been coming from all along. Jesus will show who He is, but notice the emphasis on His identity as "the Lamb..."

“The Lamb [is] its light...”

Jesus' incarnation as God in the flesh serves as the source of glory that illuminates His kingdom.

Jesus' perfect fulfillment of the Law, which keeps Him unblemished, is the source of righteousness that makes His kingdom shine.

The work of Jesus to fulfill all Messianic prophecies as they were written demonstrates how the New Jerusalem magnifies His new creation.

The glory of Jesus' faithfulness in blessing His sheep through His covenants with Israel, as promised, makes all things bright.

The sacrificial blood of Jesus, the Son of God and Messiah of Israel, purifies the souls of His people and the environment in which they live for all eternity!

That's what illuminates and sustains life. The eternally self-existing and self-sustaining power of His glory will provide life, blessings, and pleasure forevermore for those who believe these truths about Jesus as YAHWEH in the flesh.

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MAKING
CONNECTIONS

When the full glory of Jesus Christ is revealed, it will show through the fulfillment of the Father's promises to judge, bless, and fulfill His covenants with Israel. Read the following verses to understand the importance of these three factors.

Isaiah 24:23, Isaiah 60:19-20, Luke 2:32, Revelation 22:5

KNOWING GOD

1) The Book of Revelation concludes by explaining how God will illuminate His new creation. He won't use created objects to produce light as we see now. Instead, He will light up everything through the natural output of His own eternally self-existing and self-sustaining essence.



How does light symbolize purity in life today? How does our relationship with light in the physical world show principles of purity? How will the revelation of Jesus' glory later magnify His purity in the end?

2) The testimony of Revelation 21:23 highlights Jesus' identity as "the Lamb" to explain how the Father's new creation is illuminated for all eternity. Why do the scriptures emphasize Jesus' sacrifice, which took place 2,000 years ago, at a time when His salvation has been fulfilled and sin has been completely erased from the accounts of all true believers? How is the purity of Jesus' glory as "light" connected to the purity of His blood?

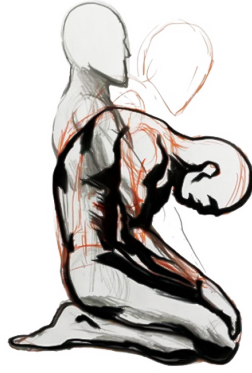
THINK ABOUT IT...

1) Most people want to go to heaven. Why? What things should we anticipate and look forward to in the New Heaven, New Earth, and New Jerusalem? Do we believe that Jesus has truly risen from the dead, ascended into heaven, and is preparing a place for us? Do we believe that the best thing about heaven is the One who created it and illuminates it? The Father focuses on Jesus as the Lamb in His new creation. What areas of our lives can we use to express our gratitude for Jesus' sacrifice as our entrance to heaven, AND as how we'll enjoy heaven forever?



2) Consider the significance of the sun and moon in the universe. However, Revelation 21:23 states that there will be no need for the sun and moon in His new creation. What does this imply about other, less important things in life? How should this understanding influence our worldview and how we value things? Are there things we currently value too much? Given how much God will change things, what practical steps can we take to focus more on eternity?

LEVELING UP



YAHWEH is...

The Source Of Light

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must remember that He is “the Great I AM.” I must remember that His glory doesn’t depend on the things we see. I will trust that He will fulfill His promises with or without the things I think He needs to do the job.

The Abundance Of Glory

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will remember that the only thing He needs to bless His people is Himself – nothing more, nothing less.

THE Sacrifice For His Own Glory

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must understand that my connection to anything good that God has to give comes as a direct result of Jesus’ blood sacrifice and all of the prophetic promises that the Father appointed for Jesus leading up to that point. I will praise and thank Jesus for His goodness because He is the Lamb who was slain.

The Lamb Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will filter my desires and ambitions through the filter of God’s eternal purposes that rest in Revelation 21:23, where we honor and praise Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world as the centerpiece of life, starting now...

Group Leader Notes: *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, “teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, [even] to the end of the age.” Amen.*

- Matthew 28:19-20