



Elohim

The Wonderful God - The Majesty of God - The Triune Nature of God - The God of LOVE

GETTING
TO KNOW
GOD

GETTING TO KNOW GOD

ELOHIM

The Incomprehensible Majesty of the Triune God of LOVE


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week 1

HOW DID
GOD DO
THAT?



In the beginning
God created the
heavens and the
earth.

- Genesis 1:1

GOD'S CHARACTER IN SCRIPTURE

אלהים



One of the words God uses to describe Himself is "wonderful." This means that God is "full of wonder." In the original Hebrew context, this idea suggests that God is incomprehensible to some extent. Some might even argue that God is impossible to comprehend completely.

That's why Romans 11:34 quotes the Old Testament with the question, "For who has known the mind of the LORD?"

"In the beginning..."

The first verse in the Bible clearly explains this idea. First, the scriptures refer to a time that none of us can fully understand. When the Bible says, "In the beginning," it describes the time before the very first day of the universe. God created our universe and everything in it, meaning He existed before the universe was created. While Genesis Chapter 1 outlines God's work in creating the universe, we shouldn't overlook the essential point about God — He existed BEFORE "the beginning!"

"God created..."

Secondly, the Hebrew word for "God" in Genesis 1:1 is "Elohim." This term reflects two aspects of God's identity: His triune nature, which includes the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and His supreme majesty, which originates from who He is.

"The heavens and the earth..."

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were equal participants in the creation of the heavens and the earth. How does this work? The scriptures offer some insight into the different levels of involvement each had, but the truth is that no one fully understands it. That's what makes God who He is. How did the mind of the Father conceive the ideas He manifested in the universe? What was His inspiration? What did Jesus look like in the beginning, before He took on the form of flesh? How did He make everything function perfectly, starting from nothing? What was the world like with the Holy Spirit hovering over it before sin? When you take the time to reflect on the Bible's first sentence, there is A LOT to ponder. Many questions we might ask about God can't be answered in this life. That's what makes Him who He is. He is Elohim: The Three-In-One-Supreme-Majestic-Creator. We're just part of His work...

MAKING
CONNECTIONS



Please read the following verses and their surrounding context. Consider how these passages relate to Genesis 1:1 and complement God's incomprehensible nature.

Job 21:22, Luke 10:22, Ephesians 1:11

KNOWING GOD

THE MAJESTIC GOD



"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

- Genesis 1:1

1.

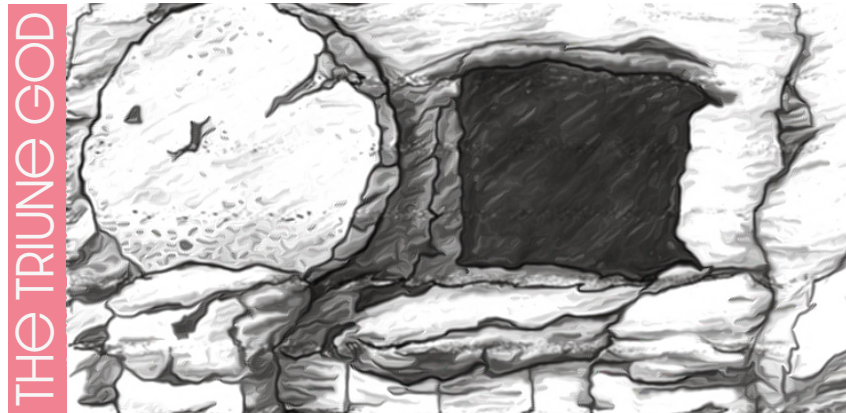
Consider the phrase "in the beginning." Can you even picture what the universe looked like BEFORE God said, "Let there be light"? Now, reflect on God's nature and power since He existed BEFORE everything was created.

How can contemplating the mysterious relationship between God, time, and matter actually strengthen our faith?

2.

Since the Hebrew word used to describe God in Genesis 1:1 is "Elohim," reflecting God's majesty, what does it signify that God existed BEFORE the darkness of the universe in the first part of Day 1?

JESUS IS GOD



1.

The Hebrew title "Elohim" refers to the triune nature of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. How do Genesis 1:3, John 1:1, and Colossians 1:16-17 work together to demonstrate that Jesus existed before the creation of the universe?

2.

Looking at God's creation on Day 1, explain how the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit showed they existed before all things by being equal participants in creation. Where is evidence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in Genesis 1:1-3?

Group Leader Notes: *The relationship between God and time is a complex and difficult idea to understand. It's a DEEP thought that no one can fully grasp. When thinking about and discussing this, remember there isn't a clear answer to how God existed first. It's important not to stop the conversation just because it's hard to express your thoughts. Keep trying. That effort is what makes God so great because He's unknowable in the most basic way!*

THINK ABOUT IT...

THE WONDERFUL GOD



The scriptures teach that, as Elohim, God was sufficient within Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit before He created the universe and everything in it. Read 2 Corinthians 3:5-6.

1.

How does that passage help us understand why God created the human race and saves us from sin, death, and hell? How does that passage help explain how the Son and Holy Spirit are vital parts in helping us fulfill the purpose the Father assigns to each of us?

2.

In 1 John 4:8, the Bible teaches that "God is love." This means that "love" was present in Genesis 1:1, before God created the heavens and the earth, before there were people. How was God's love shown then?

3.

Many people say that God created people because "He needed someone to love." Others speculate that God created the world because He loves people.

Do these ideas stand up to the testimony of scripture if the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were sufficient in themselves as "one" BEFORE the beginning?

4.

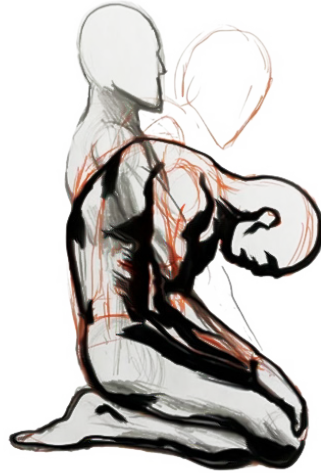
How does the supremacy of God's triune majesty challenge the modern definition of "love" and the way it's used in the world AND in church?

THE WONDERFUL GOD - THE MAJESTY OF GOD - THE TRIUNE GOD - THE LOVE OF GOD

Group Leader Notes: *One of the challenges with understanding the identity of God as described in 1 John 4:8 is that the scriptures really challenge the common understanding of "love." It becomes difficult to accept that, while "love" seems like a familiar concept everyone knows about, the scriptures emphasize a different truth. If God is incomprehensible, then so is His identity as "love." The purpose of this exercise is to realize that the truth of "love" might not be what we have believed our whole lives.*

ELOHIM IS...

LEVELING UP



The Incomprehensible God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must understand that God can’t be fully grasped. His relationship to time and space is far beyond my ability to comprehend, which means His involvement in human affairs is beyond my understanding and pay grade – and that’s good news.

The Supreme Majesty of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must remember that the marvel of God’s creation is just a small sample of His character and nature. The simple phrase “In the beginning God” reminds me that He came first, making Him MUCH greater than the most amazing things we can see in our universe.

The Triune Nature of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I should consistently reflect on Jesus’ pre-existence before His incarnation, and the power, wisdom, and control He demonstrated to bring the Father’s purposes into reality when He created the heavens and the earth. If He possessed that kind of power, wisdom, and authority, then He still does now, which works in favor of those who believe, love Him, and are called according to His purposes.

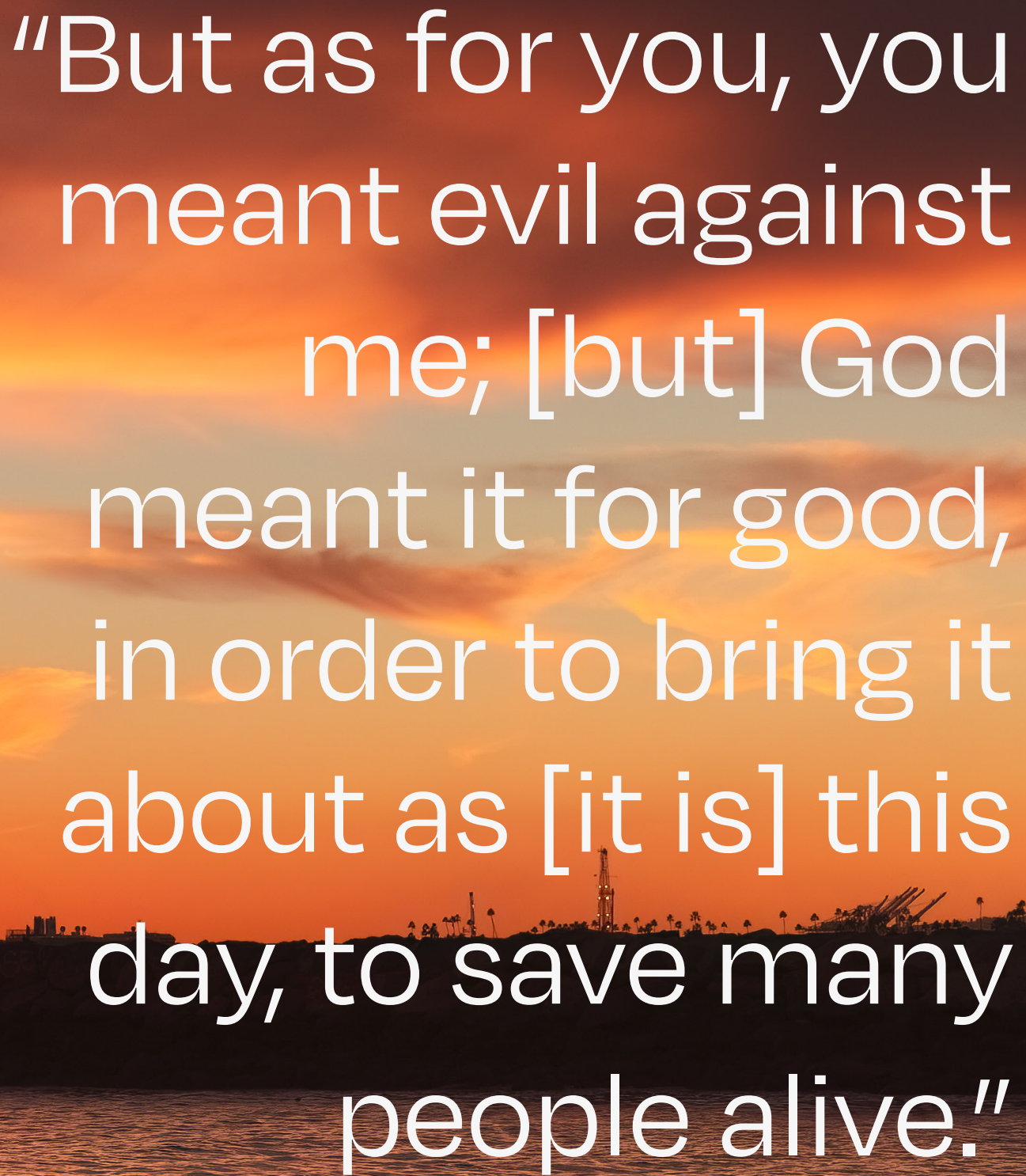
The Love of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must understand that He is the physical embodiment of ‘love’ and existed before the worlds were created. Although that’s difficult to comprehend, I need to remember that love was defined and established long before people developed thoughts, opinions, and false ways of expressing it.

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
GOD'S
INTENTIONS
ARE GOOD



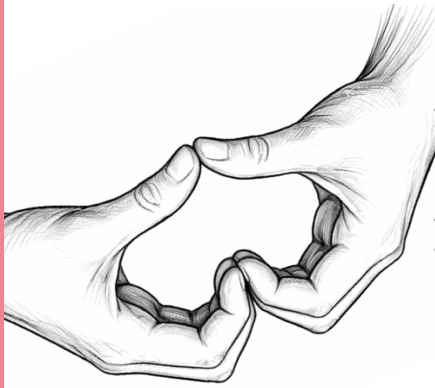
A sunset over a body of water with a city skyline in the distance. The sky is filled with warm orange and yellow hues, and the water reflects the light. The city skyline is visible in the background, with various buildings and structures silhouetted against the bright sky.

“But as for you, you
meant evil against
me; [but] God
meant it for good,
in order to bring it
about as [it is] this
day, to save many
people alive.”

– Genesis 50:20

GOD'S CHARACTER IN SCRIPTURE

אלהים



The Bible teaches in 1 Corinthians 13:5 that “love” does not intend harm to others. It also states in 1 John 4:8 that God is “love.” How do we reconcile these two ideas, given that bad things happen? People hurt others, sometimes in the name of “love” or even in the name of God. Since the Bible is true, how can we practically apply these principles in our lives?

“You meant evil against me; [but] God meant it for good...”

When we examine God’s work at the beginning, we see that He created everything in a “good” state. There was no harm or evil until humans introduced it by rebelling against God and His plans. Adam sought goodness and knowledge apart from God. He wanted to live by his own set of rules for right and wrong. That’s where the problems start—not from God.

God didn't want evil in the world. Suffering exists as a result of our sins. The amazing thing about God and His love is that He is willing and able to take the evil circumstances of life and somehow use them for His good purposes! God can bring good fruit from things with evil roots. How does He do it? That's part of God's "wonderful" nature. It's impossible to understand fully. In Genesis 50:20, God used Joseph's miserable life circumstances to save many lives. This was God's plan for Joseph's life, and He initiated it when Joseph was a young boy. God took Joseph from the comfort of his home into the home of a stranger to live as a servant, then into a prison cell as a wrongly convicted man, and finally to a position of authority over a nation! All of Joseph's hardships, as recorded in scripture, resulted from jealousy, deception, and injustice. Still, God used those circumstances to bring Joseph to the place He always intended—saving lives and souls along the way.

"To save many people alive..."

The devil tries to use sin and darkness to steal, kill, and destroy. However, God can take the consequences of the devil's influence and our depravity and turn them into good, ultimately saving souls from sin, death, and hell! The Bible reveals that God's glory and majesty are made known through His presence in our hardships, demonstrating that He can save us from death and the condemnation of our souls. That's why the love of God is beyond our understanding. That's who God is as "love."

MAKING
CONNECTIONS



Take time to read the testimony of Joseph in Genesis Chapters 37, 39-45, 47, and 50:15-21. Think about how God's involvement in Joseph's life required hardship before salvation. Consider how this pattern reveals a part of God's character as "love".

Psalm 56:4-9, Psalm 119:17, Romans 8:28

KNOWING GOD

THE MAJESTIC GOD



"But as for you, you meant evil against me; [but] God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as [it is] this day, to save many people alive."

- Genesis 50:20

1.

Joseph's testimony reveals some troubling truths about God that are hard to understand. Does God's involvement in Joseph's life challenge or change the way we think of "love"? Does this make God easier or harder to understand? How should we respond to this understanding to get to know God better?

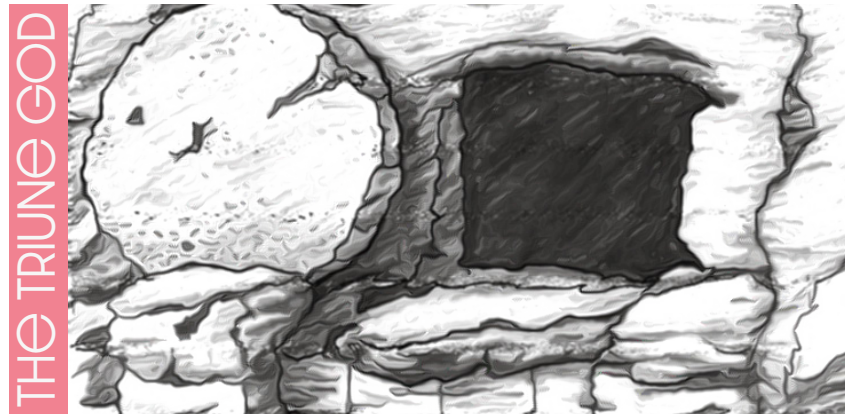
2.

Although Joseph endured the effects of his brother's jealousy for seventeen years, ultimately, hindsight allowed him to serve as an encouragement to those who wronged him. How does the timeline of Joseph's life help us grasp the challenges of God's purposes for us?

3.

How does the outcome of Joseph's life demonstrate the majesty of God's love? Was God's love toward Joseph limited to him alone, or does Genesis 50:20 reveal that God's love through Joseph also affects others? According to Genesis 50:20, what is the ultimate purpose of God revealing His majesty through love?

JESUS IS GOD



1.

Think about the testimony of Joseph and how it parallels the testimony of Jesus. How were their lives similar? How was their relationship to the Father similar?

2.

How do these similarities prove that God was using Joseph's life as a prophetic picture for Jesus, that He would later fulfill to save souls from sin, death, and hell?

Group Leader Notes: *One of the most dangerous aspects of false teaching today comes from the corrupted portrayal of "love." People have redefined this fundamental concept, which distorts and corrupts the true nature of God. The reason for including this verse in this section is to show that God's love is not idealistic or conditional. God's love does not exclude trials, injustices, and tragedies. Be sure to emphasize that God's character and integrity as "LOVE" are beyond our full understanding because God is eternal and spiritual, unlike us.*

THINK ABOUT IT...

THE WONDERFUL GOD



Reflect on God's involvement in Joseph's life and the challenges he faced throughout most of his life...

1.

When reflecting on God's involvement in Joseph's life and the challenges he faced throughout most of his life, does the modern church always portray the majesty of God's love and guidance as scripture does?

2.

How can we ensure we are growing in an understanding of God based on truth?

3.

How can we recognize the flaws and faults of so-called "Christian" churches and ministries when they misuse the words and concepts of scripture, like "love"?

4.

The testimony of God's work in Joseph's life demonstrates that God used evil "to save many people alive." How can this truth encourage and comfort us when we face tough situations? Do our trials mean that God doesn't love us?

5.

Considering the timeline of God's work in Joseph's life, should we always expect God to act immediately to deliver us? By looking at the ultimate results of God's efforts to save lives and applying that understanding to the spiritual significance of Jesus' crucifixion, what is God ultimately working toward when we go through hardships and trials?

6.

Is it fair that Joseph had to suffer for so much of his life, seeing that he didn't do anything wrong? Does Joseph's "innocence" mean that he was sinless? If Joseph was a sinner, should he be immune to injustice?

7.

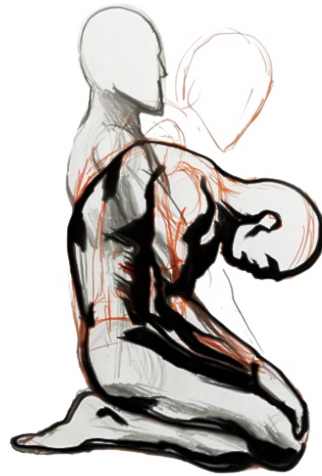
Did Jesus suffer injustice, and was He innocent and sinless? How does Jesus' testimony justify this issue?

THE WONDERFUL GOD - THE MAJESTY OF GOD - THE TRIUNE GOD - THE LOVE OF GOD

Group Leader Notes: People often ask, "Why do bad things happen to good people"? This question is answered when we remember that "none are righteous, no not one." This means that no one is immune to suffering, especially since God became flesh specifically to suffer for the sins of the world!

ELOHIM IS...

LEVELING UP



The Wonderful Timing Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must remember that “God works in mysterious ways,” which, Biblically, means that it will take a long time until the whole purpose of God’s intentions is revealed to me with clarity, as with Joseph.

The Transcendent Majesty of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I should meditate on God’s power to turn evil intentions into good outcomes—especially during tough times!

The Triune Revelation Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I should consider that the Father’s purposes often include using His people as prophetic pictures or illustrations that represent the works and purposes of Jesus. It’s never outside the realm of possibility that the Spirit leads me into difficult times to display the character of the Son, while the Father calls me to endure to serve as a public witness of His love.

The Purpose Of Elohim

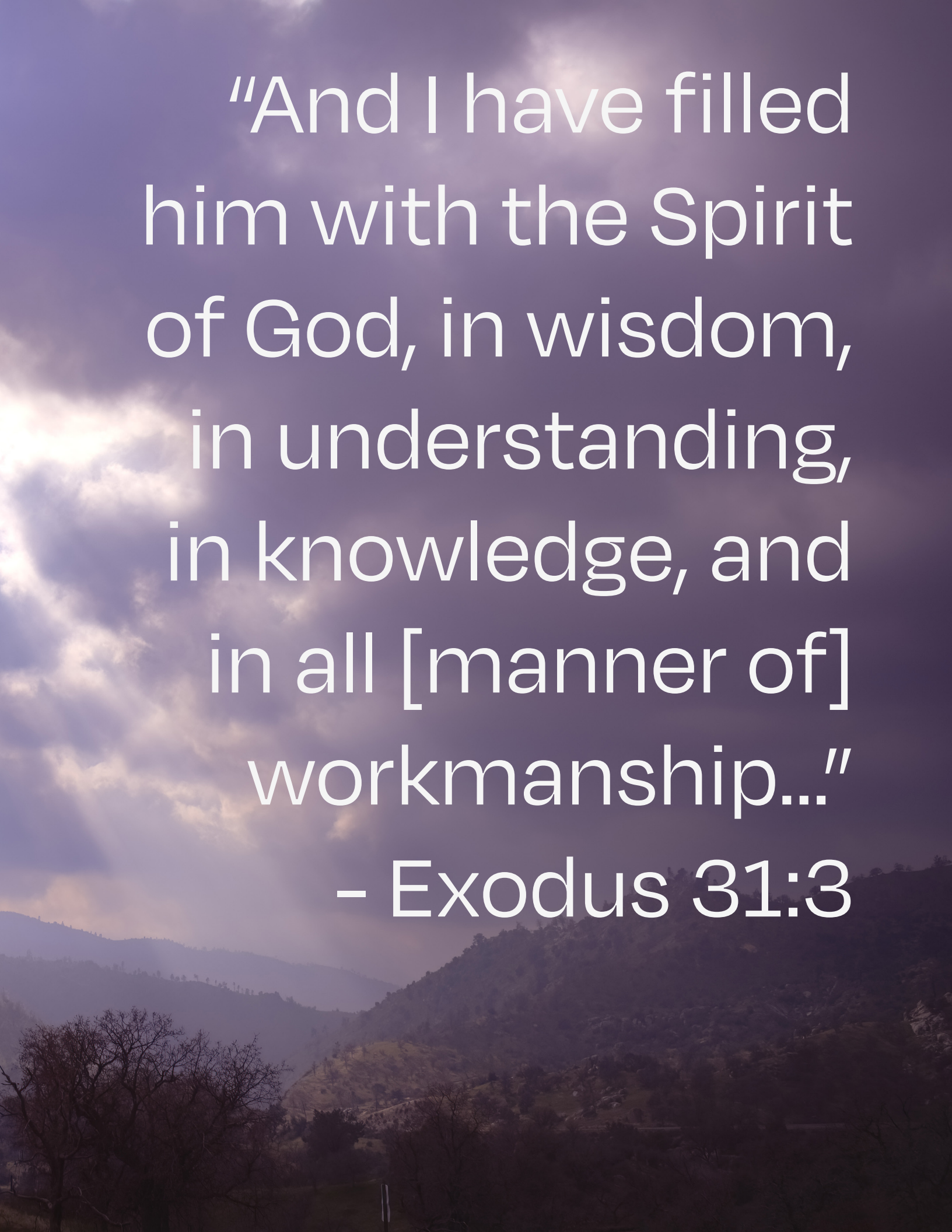
To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I need to remember that God’s goal is “to save many people alive.” He will use me just as He uses all those who love and serve Him in scripture – to somehow save souls from sin, death, and hell, as a sign of His love.

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

IT WORKS
BY THE SPIRIT
OF GOD

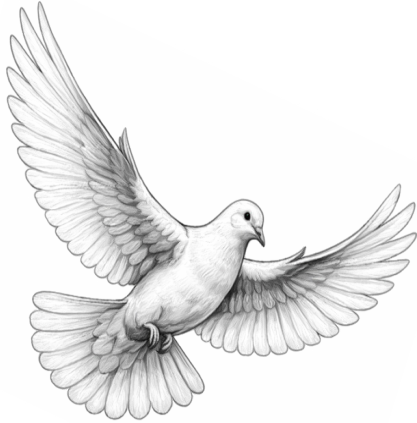
A dramatic landscape with a cloudy sky and rolling hills. The sky is filled with dark, heavy clouds, with a bright light source breaking through on the left side, creating a strong contrast and illuminating the clouds. The hills in the foreground are dark and silhouetted, while the background hills are lighter and more visible. The overall mood is serene and majestic.

“And I have filled
him with the Spirit
of God, in wisdom,
in understanding,
in knowledge, and
in all [manner of]
workmanship...”

- Exodus 31:3

GOD'S CHARACTER IN SCRIPTURE

אלהים



The concept of the triune nature of God can be difficult to understand. God created us in His likeness to help us understand. Humans also have a "3-in-1" nature. Each of us is, individually, a single person. We all have three parts to our identity: physical, mental, and spiritual. God's triune nature is similar. The scriptures describe the Father in ways that reflect His mind. He makes plans according to His holy and perfect intentions.

God's purposes are fulfilled physically only through "the Son." Jesus is the way the Father's intentions are physically realized. The Holy Spirit is the "soul" of God. He's the glue that holds the body and mind together, showing a unique personality and attitude.

"I have filled him with the Spirit of God..."

Although we can relate to God in this way, He remains uniquely transcendent. For example, when God acts, He often does so through people. The scriptures show that God can use individuals in various ways, bringing blessings or curses upon those involved. In these cases, Jesus' physical presence isn't the direct cause. The Bible teaches that it is God's Spirit that is responsible. This quality sets God apart from all of us. None of us can use our souls the way God uses His Spirit!

"In wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge..."

The testimony of Exodus 31:3 shows God's work in equipping His people to build a place of worship. When God freed Israel from Egypt, He told them to build a tabernacle—a dwelling for His presence among them. Remember, the people had just been released from slavery. They weren't trained craftsmen. Where did they learn to build and make the things God commanded? God's Spirit equipped them.

"In all [manner of] workmanship..."

When God told His people to build a tabernacle, He called upon inexperienced and incapable individuals. Their inexperience or ignorance wasn't a hindrance to God. He revealed His majesty by imparting His wisdom and ability within them. God filled them with His Spirit. Since the Holy Spirit is God, the people were infused with the attributes He desired to share, thereby equipping them for tasks they wouldn't have been able to accomplish otherwise. How does that work? Who knows? That's why God had to be the one to empower them. The people didn't request this. They didn't perform any rituals. God took it upon Himself to perform the miracle needed to prepare the people according to His purposes. This is how God's people learn to obey His commands. We all need God to perform a miracle, even to follow the simplest commands. Somehow, He miraculously fills us with His Spirit to accomplish things we otherwise couldn't do, ultimately pointing to His majesty and glory.

MAKING
CONNECTIONS



Please read the following verses. Consider how the Holy Spirit must be involved in the most basic and elaborate areas of service unto God.

1 Kings 3:9, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

KNOWING GOD



"And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all [manner of] workmanship..."

- Exodus 31:3

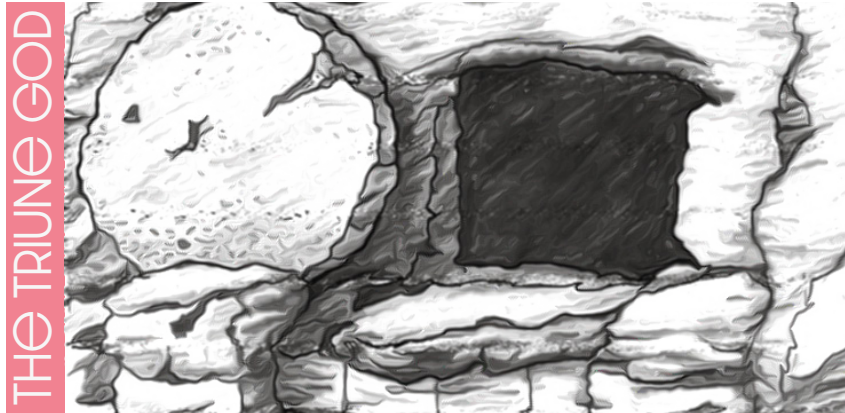
1.

When God called His people to build the tabernacle, He called individuals who were not previously trained or equipped for the task He assigned. Consider what this reveals about the habits and patterns of God's work. Who does God call to serve His purposes, and how does He train them to obey? How does this emphasize the importance of knowing God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit?

2.

When God filled His servants with His Spirit in Exodus 31:3, they were filled with the ability that affected their "wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and all manner of workmanship." In other words, God's Spirit equipped their souls, minds, and bodies to carry out the work God commanded. How can this testimony help us understand God's nature as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and yet remain one God? Even with this understanding, are there things that stay unknowable about God?

JESUS IS GOD



1.

When God filled His servants with the Holy Spirit in Exodus 31:3 to build the tabernacle, it was a unique act of God. His Spirit was not available freely at that time because Jesus had not yet paid the price for sin. The tabernacle was constructed to instruct the children of Israel in the ways of loving God through worship and sacrifice. Jesus Christ fulfilled all the lessons of the tabernacle. What does that say about the Father's focus if He uniquely provided His Spirit "ahead of schedule" to teach vital lessons about His Son long before His coming?

2.

What does this reveal about the importance of understanding who Jesus is, what He has done, and what He is destined to do?

Group Leader Notes: *While this verse highlights the involvement of the Holy Spirit, the main goal is to understand how God consistently directs His people toward Jesus. Whether the scriptures reveal the Father sharing His purpose, the Son demonstrating it in person, or the Holy Spirit working through believers, the aim remains the same: to teach about His love, despite people's natural condition, in incomprehensible ways that bring Him glory.*

THINK ABOUT IT..

THE WONDERFUL GOD



The testimony of Exodus 31:3 demonstrates that God filled His people with His Spirit to grant wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and ability.

1.

Do the scriptures show that these people understood the abilities they received? The scriptures do not indicate that these individuals took classes, attended conferences, read books, or practiced skills, yet they got the job done. How does this truth reveal the "incomprehensible" nature of God? How can this understanding inspire us to serve the LORD despite our weaknesses, limitations, or shortcomings?

2.

Since the Holy Spirit was equipping God's servants to build a functioning teaching tool about Jesus Christ and the work He would fulfill according to the promises of the Father, how does this understanding help us know that God is "one" God even though He exists and functions in three distinct forms? How can this understanding help us see that God is NOT three gods, but one God, with one mind and one purpose?

3.

Many people "serve" in church, doing various tasks. Do the traditional and modern ideas of "serving" in church or ministry match the type of service we see in scripture, where God calls unqualified and inadequate people to do spiritually focused works that help us understand the identity and work of Jesus Christ?

4.

Do the "works" in church and ministry reflect the plans and purposes of men and women, or the plans and purposes of the incomprehensible triune God?

5.

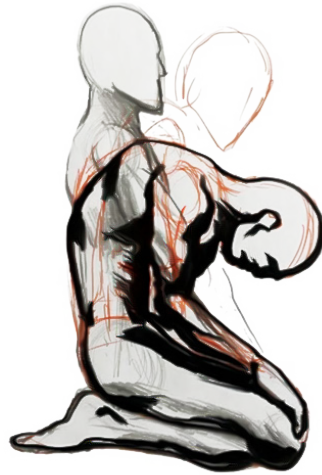
How might this difference contribute to the challenges the church faces in understanding the truth of God's love?

THE WONDERFUL GOD - THE MAJESTY OF GOD - THE TRIUNE GOD - THE LOVE OF GOD

Group Leader Notes: *Modern church culture can often shape our understanding of who God is more than the scriptures themselves, which can then discourage our relationship with Him and our service for Him. This section aims to challenge our approach to ministry and whether it aligns with God's testimony and the patterns of His work in scripture.*

ELOHIM IS..

LEVELING UP



The Wonderful Spirit Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I need to remember that I have become a dwelling place for His Spirit, which gives me access to His wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and ability, despite my inability to comprehend how that works.

The Singular Focus Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I need to remember that His focus always remains the same, even though He expresses it in three different forms. My job is to trust Him, learn from Him, yield to His convictions, and ensure I understand His ultimate purpose, even if I don't know all the details of how He will accomplish it.

The Majesty Of God's Instruction

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will trust that God will equip me to do anything and everything He expects of me, regardless of whether I feel qualified or prepared. I will trust the standards of His work revealed in scripture, where He shows that He will fill His people with Himself to do whatever is asked of me, leaving me with no excuse. The Majestic Triune Creator of heaven and earth somehow dwells within me. I am able because He is present.

The LOVE In God's Instruction

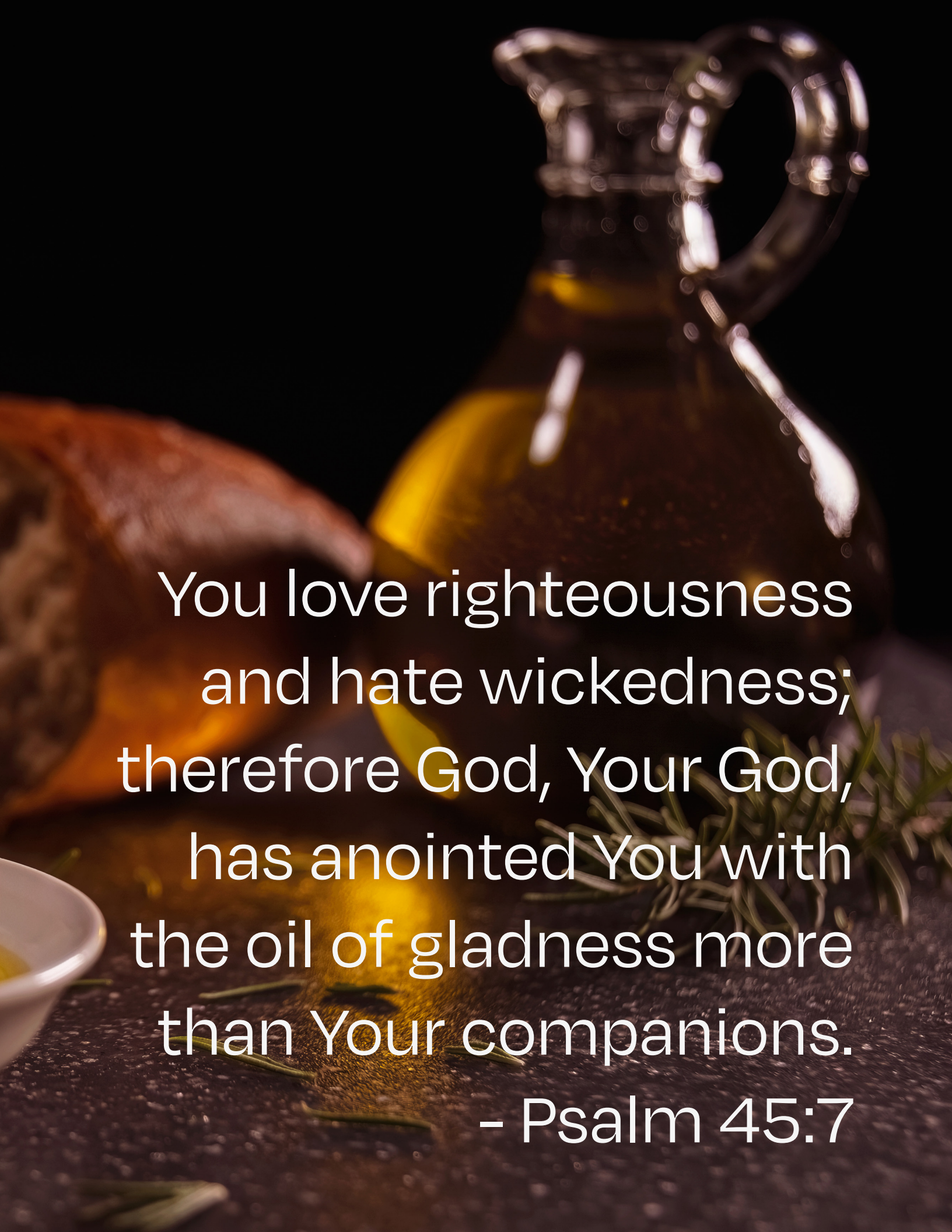
To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will trust that God will call me out of my comfort zone so that He can nurture an intimate relationship with me while teaching me to obey Him from within my own heart and soul, conforming me to Himself along the way. That's what His love is all about!

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 4

THE RIGHT KIND OF LOVE



A glass bottle of olive oil with a metal handle, a small white bowl of oil, and fresh herbs on a dark surface.

You love righteousness
and hate wickedness;
therefore God, Your God,
has anointed You with
the oil of gladness more
than Your companions.

- Psalm 45:7

GOD'S CHARACTER IN SCRIPTURE

אלהים



The issue of "righteousness" is a complex topic. When God created the heavens and the earth, He set the standards of right and wrong before creating humans. This means that humans don't have a say in the matter. True "righteousness" is based on God's decisions and declarations, and He never sought our opinions or advice.

Psalm 45:7 states that God loves righteousness. God loves the things HE declared to be "right." The verse also notes that God hates wickedness. God hates the things that oppose or question His righteousness and integrity. This simple principle provides GREAT insight into what true "love" is all about.

Psalm 45 is essentially a love song, as noted in the subscript. It prophetically describes the affection of God's people for the Messiah, reflecting God's love for Him. The first part of the psalm teaches that the Messiah of Israel is uniquely endowed with transcendent strength, glory, and majesty; thus, He is referred to as "O Mighty One" in a way comparable to God Himself. The power and authority of the Messiah surpass all other kings, and this power and authority are rooted in righteousness—the very righteousness of God that He cherishes. The portrayal of the Messiah illustrates that He shares the same attributes as God Himself. The Messiah is the physical embodiment of God as Israel's King. He's the KING of kings. The King appreciates the traits of His own attributes and detests anything that opposes Him or is contrary to Him as God. What does this teach us about "love"?

"You love righteousness..."

Love is a tool that God uses to reveal Himself, just as it describes His affection for righteousness. God is righteous. God loves righteousness. He shows His righteousness through the Messiah of Israel. Jesus said that God loved the world so much that He gave His only begotten Son to die for the sins of the world. By combining these truths, we see that love is a tool God uses to reveal the goodness of His attributes, ultimately saving people from sin, death, and hell. When the scriptures say that God "loves righteousness," we see how God proved it: He revealed Himself in the flesh according to His Word of righteousness. When the scriptures say that God hates wickedness, we see how He proved that as well: He waged war against the wages of sin by going to the cross and then rising from the dead.

"Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness..."

We understand that genuine love requires showing God's uniquely righteous qualities in the likeness of His Son, who sacrificed Himself for the spiritual well-being of others, in a way that's completely opposite to sin. That's the true definition of love. It has always been that way.

MAKING
CONNECTIONS



*Read the following verses to see how
the scriptures connect the concepts of
righteousness and love to the revelation of
Jesus as the Son of God.*

Psalm 33:4-5, Isaiah 61:1-3,
Luke 4:16-21, Hebrews 1:8-9

KNOWING GOD

THE MAJESTIC GOD



"You love righteousness and hate wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions."
- Psalm 45:7

1.

When the scriptures state that "God loves righteousness," why is it important to understand that God is "Elohim," the Creator of the heavens and the earth mentioned in Genesis Chapter 1? How does the creation account in Genesis Chapter 1 establish God's unique brand of righteousness beyond the modern understanding of righteousness?

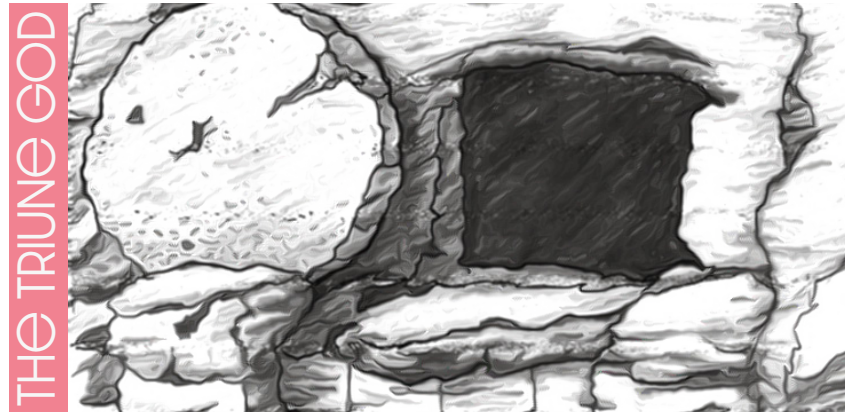
2.

When the scriptures say that God "loves" righteousness, does that simply mean God has affection for righteousness, or is there a deeper meaning? For example, people often say they "love" their favorite food or family members. Is God's love for righteousness similar to that kind of affection, or does the Bible describe something more complex?

3.

If there is more to it, how does God's love for righteousness differ from the common understanding of "love" today? How can our understanding of "righteousness" and God's triune nature as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit help us understand the "love" that Psalm 45:7 is referring to?

JESUS IS GOD



1.

In Psalm 45:7, the Bible states that the Father "anointed" someone with "the oil of gladness." This refers to Israel's Messiah, a Hebrew title that translates into the English phrase "Anointed One." When we call Jesus "the Christ," we are identifying Him as the Messiah – the Anointed One. How then does Psalm 45:7 describe the unique and transcendent love between the Father and the Son?

2.

Is the Holy Spirit involved in this relationship? How does the revelation of Jesus Christ – the Anointed One – fulfill the expression of God's righteousness as described in Psalm 45:7?

Group Leader Notes: *The truth of the matter is, no one can fully understand the concept of God's triune nature. However, that doesn't mean that we can't deepen our current understanding by marveling over how incomprehensible He is. Don't be afraid of discussing questions about God's triune nature that cannot be answered. That doesn't make the Bible wrong. It illustrates His transcendence!*

THINK ABOUT IT...



Understanding the triune nature of God requires us to remember that Jesus existed before He was made incarnate, which means that He has been with the Father since before the beginning...

1.

Does the humanity of Jesus diminish Him in any way if Psalm 45:7 illustrates a loving relationship between the Father and the Son BEFORE Jesus was born in Bethlehem? When Jesus became flesh as described in John 1:14, did He stop being part of "the Trinity"? How does the role of the Holy Spirit, as described in Psalm 45:7, act as the glue that keeps Jesus connected to His heavenly nature?

2.

In Psalm 45:7, the scriptures clearly state that God "hates wickedness." Many people believe that a "loving God" shouldn't hate. Many people believe that God loves all people and considers everyone to be like His children. Do these beliefs align with the clear statement of Psalm 45:7?

3.

If God truly “hates” wickedness, then wicked people would be considered enemies of God. How does our understanding of Elohim – God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – help us understand the true difference between righteousness and wickedness, and how can this knowledge enable a friendly relationship with God?

4.

The Bible teaches that when we believe in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we receive the Father’s grace to be forgiven and cleansed of all sin through the regeneration of our souls by the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:29 states that once we are “born again,” God begins to work to conform us to the image of Jesus Christ. Does this mean that once we become Christians, we become like God?

5.

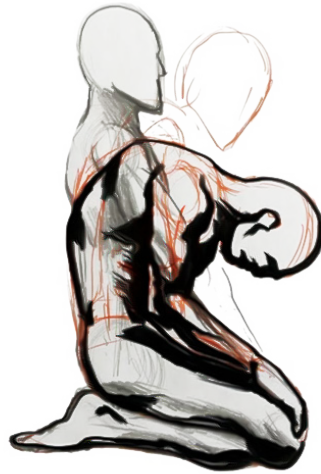
How does Psalm 45:7 ultimately exalt Jesus Christ above everything in heaven and earth, demonstrating that He is supremely majestic? Can you understand how the Father’s work to conform His people into the image of His Son exalts His Son above all people?

THE WONDERFUL GOD - THE MAJESTY OF GOD - THE TRIUNE GOD - THE LOVE OF GOD

Group Leader Notes: *It can be tempting to try to find an answer to every question about God. That’s not possible. It’s important to remember that, while these ideas about God might be “deep,” they are also the most basic principles about Him. God reveals His “wonderful” attribute so that we can marvel at the supremacy of His majesty and the ways He tells it, not to try to figure Him out.*

ELOHIM IS...

LEVELING UP



The LOVE Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I need to remember that God’s love isn’t just an emotion He shows toward things He prefers more than others. Love is the revealing of God Himself.

The Righteousness Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will focus on the clear difference between righteousness and wickedness as described in scripture. There are no grey areas, so I will do my best to rely on the understanding that the Bible provides to distinguish between them, and align my mind and opinions with the truth of God’s Word.

The Anointing Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will remember that Jesus is the Anointed One. He is the Messiah of Israel, the One the Father provided to fulfill all of the eternally unconditional promises of His Word concerning blessings and judgments. Jesus is the One behind it all and is faithful to fulfill everything as it is written.

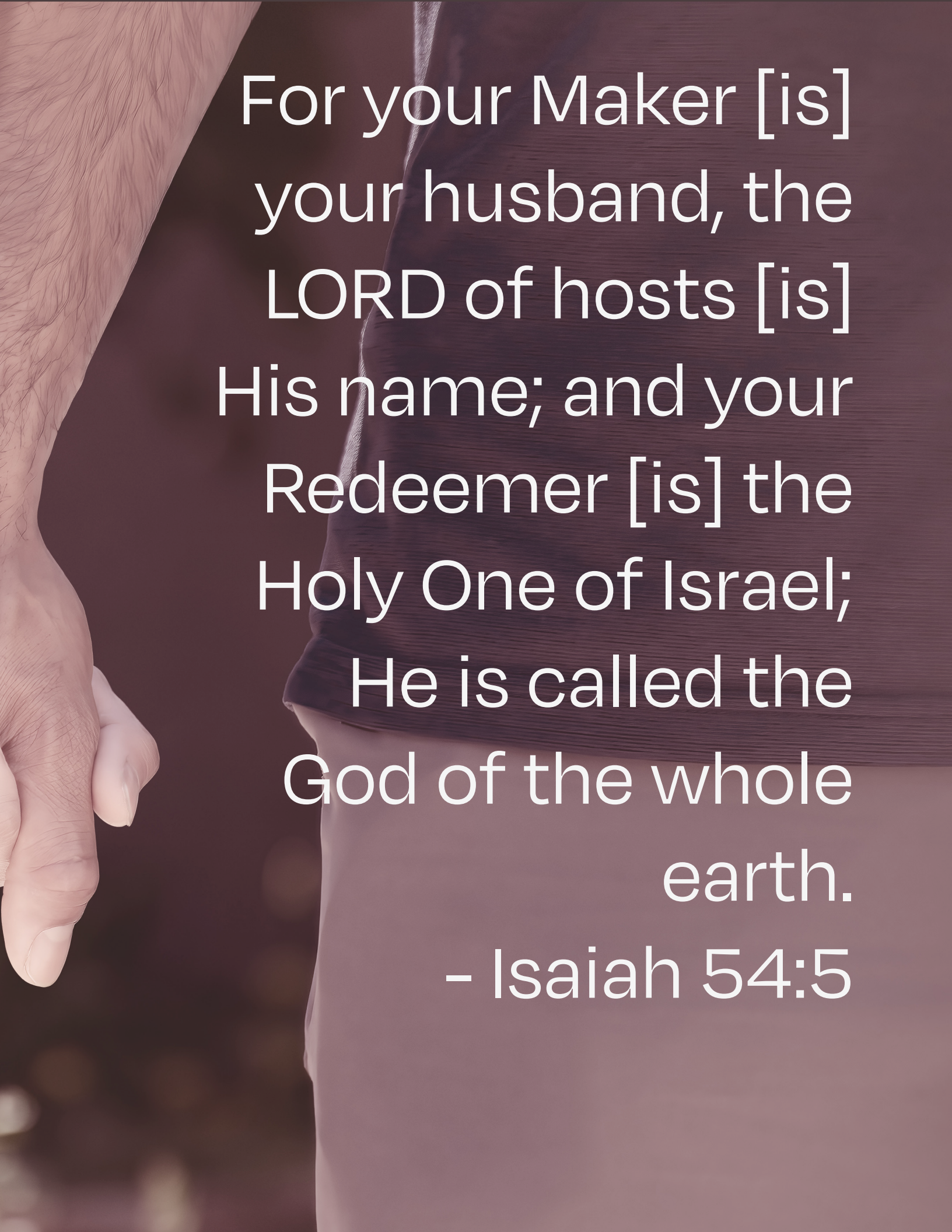
The Wonderful Companion

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will remember that God truly loves His people, but not more than Himself. While I can't understand how the Father spoke to His Son and anointed Him BEFORE He was born in this world, I know that this miracle is what makes God supremely majestic!

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
ONE
CONNECTION



For your Maker [is]
your husband, the
LORD of hosts [is]
His name; and your
Redeemer [is] the
Holy One of Israel;
He is called the
God of the whole
earth.

- Isaiah 54:5

GOD'S CHARACTER IN SCRIPTURE

אלהים



When a man marries a woman, they become "one" in the eyes of God. This sounds simple until we consider the many differences between men and women. How are two opposing beings supposed to function as one? Marriage becomes even more remarkable when we see verses like Isaiah 54:5 and realize that God calls Himself a "husband" of sorts. God is the Creator, yet He wants to join Himself to people who are far beneath Him and opposite to Him.

People are sinners. God is holy. People are mortal. God is immortal. People are liars and failures. God is truth and the source of goodness. Is there a more striking contrast? In Isaiah 54, God encourages the nation of Israel. He created Israel to be beautiful and glorious, reflecting His majesty, but their rebellion caused them to resemble a worthless, discarded woman. In Isaiah 54, God compares them to a woman who was forsaken, grieved, and disgraced as a widow. This clearly doesn't describe the ideal marriage candidate by typical standards in any culture.

"For your Maker [is] your husband..."

It's important to reflect on how God described Himself when He called Himself Israel's husband. God is the Creator. If He can create people and nations from nothing, He can restore individuals and nations through His power and glory. Israel may have looked like a shameful woman to God at one point, but He can change that! For those of us who come from difficult backgrounds or are currently dealing with shameful issues, this is wonderful news!

“The LORD of hosts [is] His name...”

God is the LORD of hosts, signifying His supreme control over heaven and earth. Who can stop Him from doing what He intends for Israel or anyone else? Who can successfully oppose God, given that He commands all individuals, armies, and nations? If we desire God to transform our lives, it's reassuring to know He has this level of control over everything!

“And your Redeemer [is] the Holy One of Israel...”

God is the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. He promised to redeem His people: to purchase them as His possession and bring them into His fold. He would rescue them from the filth they were living in to embrace them as His prized possession. God can do this because He is holy. He is separate from everything He made, especially the sin, corruption, decay, darkness, and death that define us. God can work within human affairs without being affected by them. That is what makes Him God. Jesus is Israel's Redeemer. He is our Redeemer, too! He took on flesh to purchase His people with His holy blood, joining Himself to those who believe! This is the only way to connect to God and His unique love.

MAKING
CONNECTIONS



Read the following passages and notice how God initiates a loving relationship with those who are “less than desirable,” contrary to the normal human love.

Jeremiah 3:14, Hosea 2:19-20,
Ephesians 5:25-27

KNOWING GOD

THE MAJESTIC GOD



"For your Maker [is] your husband, The LORD of hosts [is] His name; And your Redeemer [is] the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth."

- Isaiah 54:5

Notice how Isaiah 54:5 explains that our Creator is also our husband. God's reference to being our "husband" describes the quality of oneness He desires in our relationship with Him to show us what true love is all about.

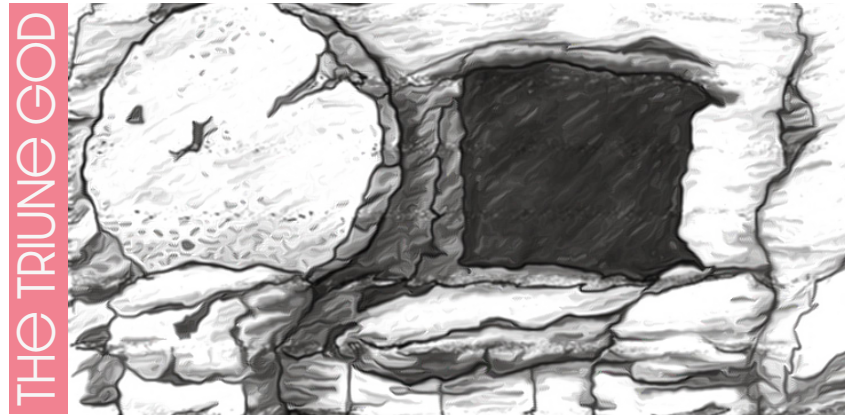
1.

How does this relationship between God as our "Maker" and "Husband" help us understand our purpose as human beings?

2.

The Bible teaches that our Creator wants to be intimately connected to us as our "husband." Can you learn the truth about love apart from God in some other type of relationship? How is our understanding of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit helpful to our practical connection with God to learn about true love?

JESUS IS GOD



1.

When the LORD explained His desire to connect with His people as a husband, He also described Himself as “the LORD of hosts,” our “Redeemer,” the Holy One of Israel, and the God of the whole earth. Knowing that Jesus redeemed His people to Himself—dying for the sins of the world while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8), while we were His enemies (Romans 5:10), and children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3)—how does God’s love differ from the love seen in this world?

2.

Do people seek marriage partners the way God does? Can people create harmony and peace in marriage relationships like God does through the work of His Son and the indwelling of His Spirit?

Group Leader Notes: *The ideas of marriage and love have been badly distorted and corrupted by the world over the years. Some in your group may struggle to understand the pure standards set in scripture. It might be helpful to spend extra time explaining the key differences between the Biblical standards of marriage and the world’s standards to clarify why we see so many problems in today’s world, and to compare God’s attributes and intentions documented in scripture with the world’s approach, which has strayed from scripture.*

THINK ABOUT IT..

THE WONDERFUL GOD



When you look around the world, you see many struggling, broken, and corrupt marriages, even in the church...

1.

What do you think the cause is when you consider the details of Isaiah 54:4? Is it likely that these types of marriages consider the Biblical testimony of God as the Creator? Is it likely that these types of marriages make Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, the primary focus of their relationship? Is it likely that these types of marriages submit to the sovereign authority of God as "the LORD of hosts?"

2.

If people aren't willing to seek God and submit to Him through His Word, is it possible for their version of "love" to produce God's version of love and the fruit of His love?

3.

If it's impossible to fully understand God's triune nature and majesty as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, yet God uses each aspect of Himself to unite Himself with His people in love, is it possible to fully understand God's love?

4.

Why does God link His love as a "husband" to His sovereignty (LORD of hosts), His mercy (Redeemer), and His holiness (Holy One of Israel)? What role do those aspects play in love? Does our ability to comprehend these things influence our capacity to love others as God does, or is that also beyond our understanding?

5.

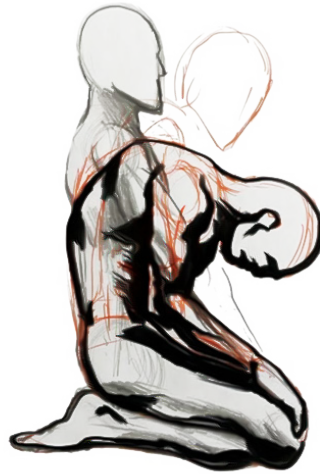
How can God be Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and still be one Creator and one Husband for ALL His people—Jew and Gentile alike? Does your ability to understand this concept make God weaker or more majestic? What does it say that a God like this called you by name to be His to share all of His possessions in His kingdom, forever? How should you respond to this truth?

THE WONDERFUL GOD - THE MAJESTY OF GOD - THE TRIUNE GOD - THE LOVE OF GOD

Group Leader Notes: *While trying to understand these complex aspects of God, remember that God chooses each of His people and calls them by name! Encourage your group to reflect on this truth, knowing that the supremely majestic, holy KING of kings desires to connect with us – imperfect, wretched sinners – to bless us forever, for His glory.*

ELOHIM IS...

LEVELING UP



The Majesty Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must remember that He is not only the Creator of the universe but also MY Maker. He formed me, knew me before I was in the womb, and gave me a purpose for life. He’s in charge. He dictates purpose. He breathes life into me daily and is actively involved in my life, drawing me to Himself—regardless of how things look or feel.

The Affection Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will remember that God’s role as a “husband” in my life signifies two things. First, He is the head of my life. He leads. I submit. Second, He guides me from the suffering of bondage to sin into His marvelous light. He pulls me out of death into life. He transfers me from the corruption and faults of my flesh to the glory of His holiness. It doesn’t matter whether I understand how. I’ll never know why. That’s just who God is as LOVE.

The Involvement Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must remember that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, working together to guide my life toward good. I must trust that the Father is in total control of all things at all times as the LORD of hosts. I must trust that the blood of His Son has cleansed my soul and covers all faults. I must embrace the holiness of God by walking in the Spirit rather than my flesh, seeing it as a privilege rather than a burden, and looking to the testimony of Israel as powerful proof that denying God’s involvement in my life and rebelling against Him never leads to anything good.

The God Of The Whole Earth

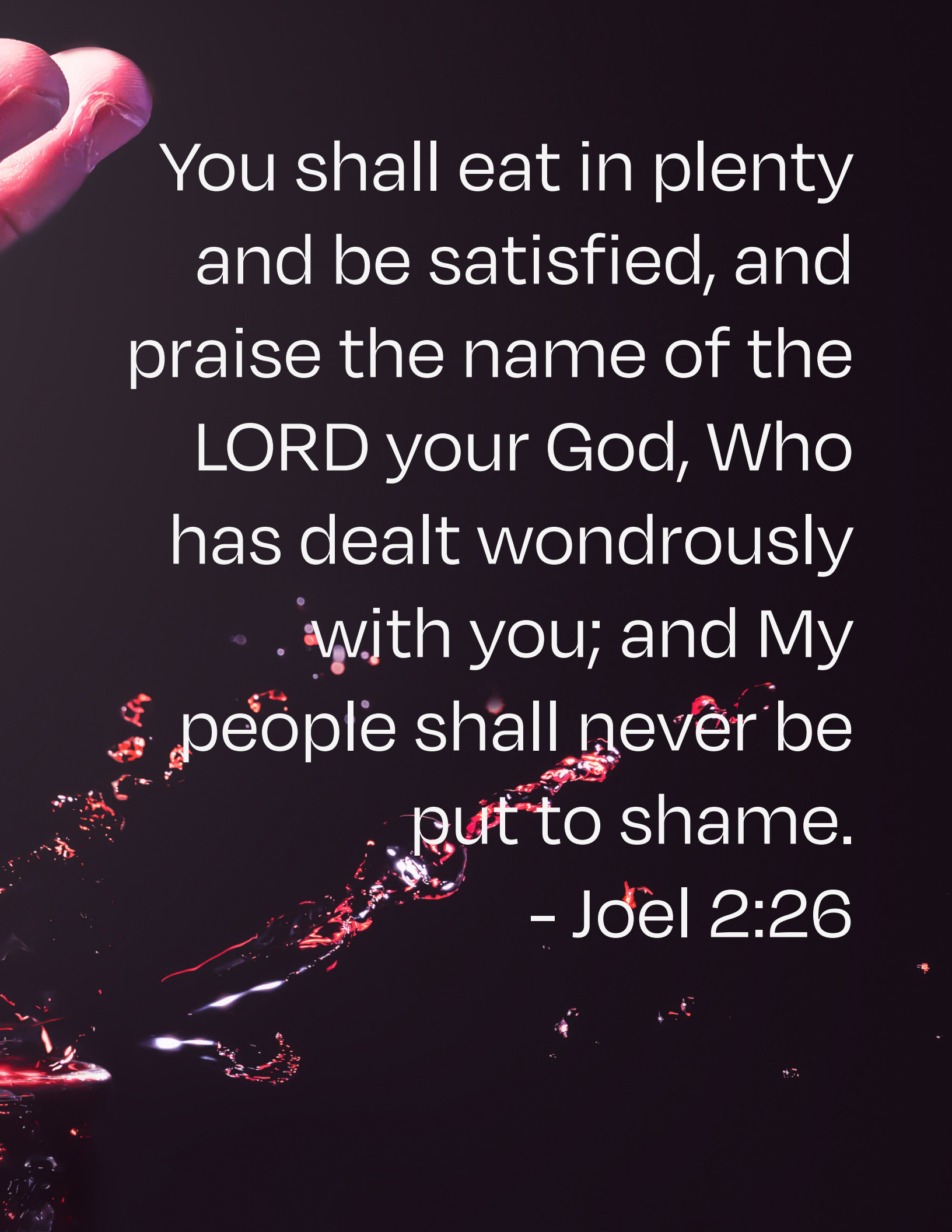
To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will cherish the privilege of being united with the God of the entire earth. There is truly nothing better!

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

THE ULTIMATE
STAIN REMOVER

A hand is visible in the top left corner, holding a glass of red wine. A splash of red wine is captured in mid-air, creating a dynamic, artistic effect against a solid black background. The lighting highlights the texture of the wine and the skin of the hand.

You shall eat in plenty
and be satisfied, and
praise the name of the
LORD your God, Who
has dealt wondrously
with you; and My
people shall never be
put to shame.

- Joel 2:26

GOD'S CHARACTER IN SCRIPTURE

אלהים



Some stains are simply impossible to remove. Depending on the cause and duration of the stain, some stains can leave a permanent mark, damaging various items. If this is true for spills, accidents, and tragedies, how much more so for sin? Sin leaves a mark every time it's committed. The stain caused by sin also brings shame and misery that can linger long after it occurs. Fortunately, the LORD can fix this problem and has promised to do so on our behalf. He's even given us "proof of concept" through His work with the nation of Israel.

During the days of the prophet Joel, God judged Israel for their unrepentant sin by sending an army of locusts. The scriptures testify that these insects destroyed everything, leading to a devastating famine. You can't rebel against God without facing consequences. You can't deny or ignore God and expect life to continue as usual. God judges sin, and the destruction He brought upon the land of His own "special treasure" proves that He is serious about this!

"You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied..."

Even though the people's sins were serious, God promised to correct and restore them. The effects of the locust plague were real! Israel was left severely weakened and hopeless because of the destruction. Still, God declared that His effort to correct the hearts of His people would lead to the restoration of both the people and the land. God promised to forgive their sins, remove the shame caused by their transgressions, and restore the people to satisfaction, inspiring incredible praise!

“Who has dealt wondrously with you...”

Examining Israel's history shows that God doesn't lie. It's hard to understand how Israel has faced judgment many times for its sins yet continues to function and thrive today. God restored Israel from the locust plague during the days of Joel. The shame that Israel experienced in the past has been partly lifted. However, God isn't finished yet.

“My people shall never be put to shame...”

Why would God choose a nation like Israel to be His if He knew how often He'd have to discipline them? Why would God stay faithful to the promises He made to a nation that keeps being unfaithful to Him? Why are God's promises to Israel so full of blessings if they keep trying to live by their own standards? The incomprehensible love of God looks mercifully upon sinners deserving hell, who are overwhelmed by the shame of depravity. The incomprehensible love of God removes impurity and the shame of sin's stain while preserving the whole to bless abundantly. The history of God's work in Israel shows this.

MAKING
CONNECTIONS



To deepen understanding of God's love through forgiveness, examine Israel's testimony in scripture. Read verses where God describes His people and highlights miracles blessing them despite their flaws. Deuteronomy 6:10-12, Nehemiah 9:25-26, Isaiah 55:2

KNOWING GOD

THE MAJESTIC GOD



You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; and My people shall never be put to shame.

- Joel 2:26

1.

When God promised to bless Israel in Joel 2:26, He had just finished discussing the judgment He would send for their disobedience. How does this expression of love from God differ from the "love" we see in the world?

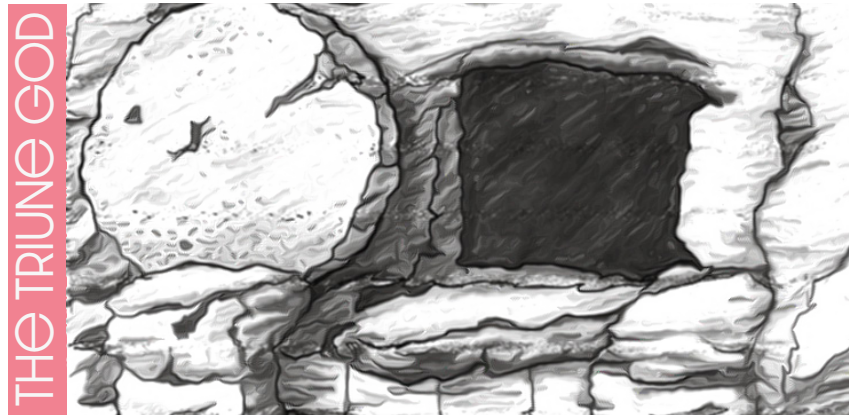
2.

How can God's love include both curses and blessings at the same time, as shown in scripture?

3.

The prophecy of Joel explains that God judged Israel for their disobedience, especially their idolatry. God wanted to be their only object of worship, but Israel created many other gods and worshiped them instead. When God promised to restore Israel, He also said His restoration would lead His people to praise Him, which is what He desired all along. What does that reveal about God's love: Is it motivated by His affection for people, or is it a tool He uses to equip His people for the purpose He designed for them?

JESUS IS GOD



1.

The prophecy of Joel 2:26 has been partially fulfilled. God has restored Israel since He sent the locust plague described there, but He has not blessed them to the extent required by this passage. God promised that His people would "never be put to shame," referring to the complete cleansing of the nation. How does Jesus' life, death, and resurrection bring Israel closer to the complete fulfillment of this promise?

2.

How is Jesus' 2nd Coming necessary for the fulfillment of this promise to Israel? Is the promise of Jesus' 2nd Coming an expression of God's love if it's premised on judgment?

3.

Is the promise of Jesus' 2nd Coming an expression of God's love if it's premised on judgment?

Group Leader Notes: A common misunderstanding about God's love is ignoring His righteousness. Many believe that God's judgments conflict with His love, but scripture shows that His judgments are how He purifies His people so they can fully benefit from His blessings. The work God does to purify sinners is at the heart of Biblical love. Be sure to emphasize this critical truth.

THINK ABOUT IT..



The testimony of Deuteronomy 7:7-8 explains that God chose Israel to be His special people simply because He loved them. He knew they would be rebellious and unfaithful. He predicted their sins and wickedness, even foreseeing when these offenses would happen.

1.

Is it possible to understand why God would choose this nation to be His "special treasure" (Deuteronomy 7:6) and the "apple of His eye" (Deuteronomy 32:10), even though He was also aware of how badly they would treat Him? How does this relate to why God chose you to be His child? Can you understand why He chose you, and what does that reveal about the majestic nature of God as LOVE?

2.

Did God's love for Israel diminish when He judged them as written in the prophecy of Joel? Did Israel's suffering during that judgment mean that God was cutting them off?

3.

How does Joel 2:26 prove that God's love "endures all things" as stated in 1 Corinthians 13:7?

4.

The prophecy of Joel 2:26 was only partly fulfilled by the time of Jesus. How does Jesus' testimony demonstrate that God's love remains consistent, even when He was despised and rejected by Israel as a man? How was Jesus' ministry an extraordinary miracle that helped remove Israel's shame?

5.

How does the account of the church's birth in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost in Acts Chapter 2 show the Holy Spirit's involvement in the promise of Joel 2:26?

6.

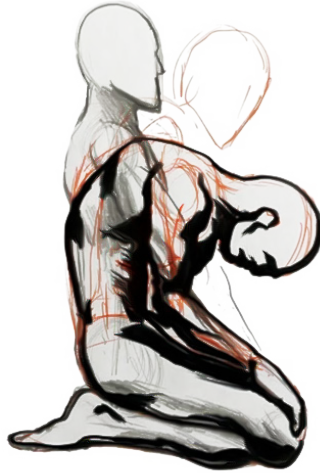
Considering how much rejection and sin God endured through all of this, what does that reveal about God's love for us? Is there anything God is unwilling to address in our lives to keep us His own?

THE WONDERFUL GOD - THE MAJESTY OF GOD - THE TRIUNE GOD - THE LOVE OF GOD

Group Leader Notes: *One of the most important things to emphasize in this section is that our sin leaves a mark that offends God, which, if not addressed by Him, will condemn us to hell—period! The miracle of God's love is that He is willing to endure the difficulty of putting up with us to remove the marks and stains of sin when we trust His integrity and process of doing so. Encourage your group to remember that the pain of sanctification is not an indication that God has turned His back on us. The difficulty of sanctification is a sign of love as it prepares us to stand before Him without shame, to receive the full glory of His blessings without restraint! As with Israel, this work takes time and requires the ongoing work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

ELOHIM IS...

LEVELING UP



The Wonderful Provision Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I need to remember that God has sovereign control over everything. He can stop the blessings at any moment and restart them at any time. The struggles I face now are not a sign of how things will be forever. We don't have to know HOW God will satisfy. We just have to trust that He WILL because He said so.

The Majestic Name Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will remember that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which means He is always worthy of praise because He is constantly revealing Himself to me in love, despite my inability to fully understand and my tendency to reject and rebel against Him.

The Wonder Of God’s Love

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will praise Him for saving me from sin, death, and hell. I will be thankful that God has forgiven me, cleansed me, and sealed me as His child despite my naturally shameful condition.

The Effects Of God’s Love

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will remember that my flaws and the natural state of my soul cannot be fixed by human means, but God is able and faithful to restore and purify me so I am blameless in His sight. If He can perfect the entire nation of Israel, He can help me too!

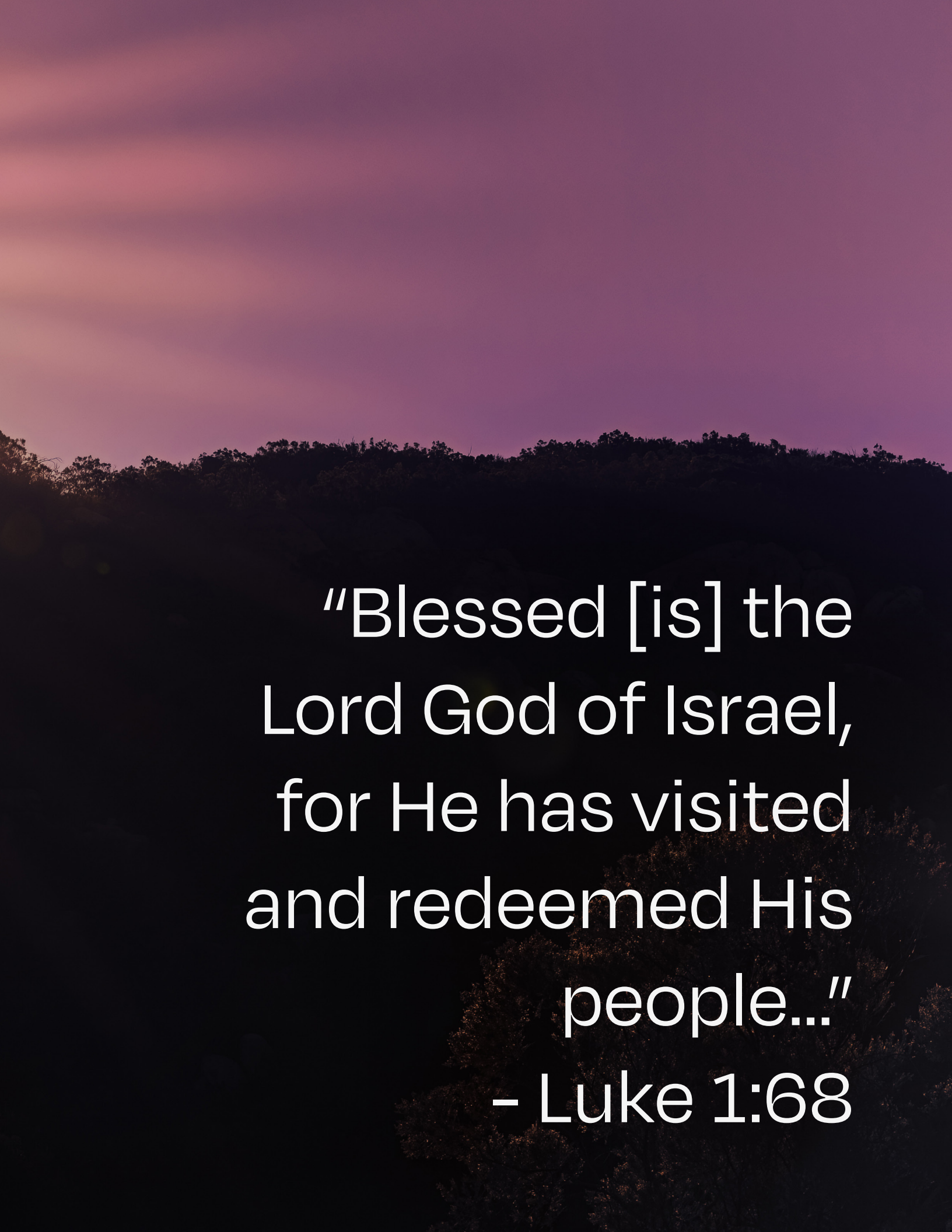
Group Leader Notes: *Finish each meeting with these “resolutions” to give group members specific points to focus on through the week in light of the study material and discussions. It’s also a good idea to revisit these things the following week to start conversation, discover needs for prayer, and encourage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



WEEK 7

ONE

LOVE



“Blessed [is] the
Lord God of Israel,
for He has visited
and redeemed His
people...”

- Luke 1:68

GOD'S CHARACTER IN SCRIPTURE

אלהים



The idea of God's "love" is difficult for many people to understand. Why? Because many try to interpret and connect with God's love based on their situation. Others attempt to experience God's love through feelings and personal encounters. But, this is not how the Bible guides us to approach it. So, how should we understand God's love? We are meant to trust what scripture testifies and believe it to be true. God wants us to look at His character, His promises, and His actions to fulfill them, so we can see how His love surpasses our ability to fully understand.

"Blessed [is] the Lord God of Israel..."

To truly understand God's love, we must recognize how He identifies Himself as its source. He's "the Lord God of Israel." He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He's the God of the Bible. Many people are confused about love because they don't seek THIS God. Instead, they chase after something else and learn about false versions of love along the way. God isn't the one to blame here. He clearly states that there is only one God, and He's the God of Israel.

Now connect that thought to the full counsel of God's Word. The God of the universe identifies Himself as the God of Israel. In Deuteronomy 7:7, God says He chose Israel as His "special treasure" because He loves them. This is the same nation that He calls "stiff-necked." This is the same nation He called unfaithful and adulterous. This is the same nation whose spiritual leaders He called "a brood of vipers." This is the same nation that God judged and destroyed repeatedly throughout history because of their disobedience and evil practices.

Still, God called Himself the God of Israel. All of Israel's sins couldn't alter God's perspective or purpose for them. Who can love like that? Who knowingly chooses to align with unfaithful, rebellious, stubborn, self-righteous people and remains unchanged in character and purpose?

"He has visited and redeemed His people..."

Then, God physically demonstrated His love to those very people. Luke 1:68 shows a man named Zacharias filled with the Holy Spirit, prophesying about God. Despite Israel's spiritual condition, God visited His people by taking on flesh, as He had promised centuries before. Despite Israel's spiritual condition, the God of Israel was merciful. He endured long with His people to accomplish the necessary work of redeeming them from the eternal consequences of their sin. Israel's failures are well-documented in scripture, as are God's judgments against them. Yet, God remained faithful to His Word, dwelt with His people, and performed incredible miracles to heal them physically, mentally, and spiritually. The Father made the promise. The Holy Spirit reminded the people of it. Jesus fulfilled it.

MAKING
CONNECTIONS



Read the following verses and observe how frequently God refers to His relationship with the nation of Israel. Keep these verses in mind as you go through the rest of this section to understand how our view of God's relationship with Israel as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit greatly influences our understanding of His love and faithfulness.

Exodus 4:31, 1 Chronicles 29:10-20,
Psalm 41:13, Psalm 72:17-19,
Psalm 106:48, Psalm 111:9

KNOWING GOD

THE MAJESTIC GOD



"Blessed [is] the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited and redeemed His people..."
- Luke 1:68

1.

In Luke 1:68, Scripture describes God as "blessed." This Greek word for "blessed" is used only of God in Scripture to elevate Him above everything else, highlighting that He is worthy of an exclusive quality of praise. Do we truly know God well enough to recognize that He is "the Blessed One," deserving of admiration and praise like no other, or do we let things in our lives compete with our love and focus on Him?

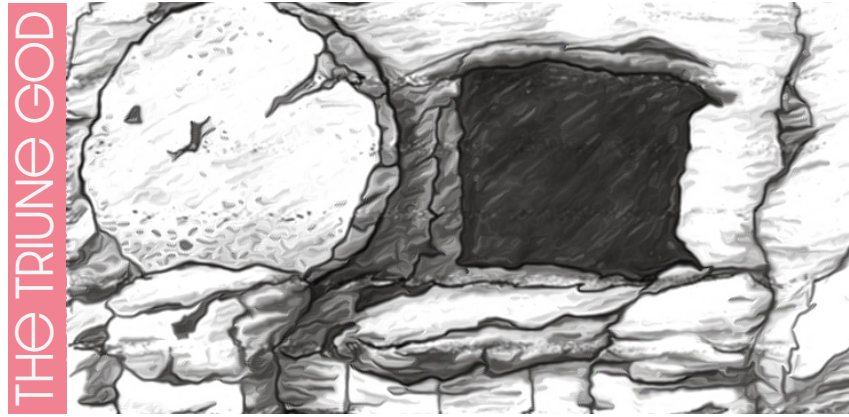
2.

What practical steps can we take to make sure we exalt and praise God as He rightfully deserves?

3.

The testimony of God in the Bible shows that He consistently refers to His relationship with the nation of Israel as the primary way He reveals His majesty and love. Is it possible to understand God, appreciate Jesus, or know His purpose for our lives without also considering His relationship and covenants with Israel?

JESUS IS GOD



1.

The testimony of Luke 1:68 states that Zacharias was “filled with the Holy Spirit,” and began to praise God for His work in fulfilling His promise to Israel and the world through the birth of Jesus Christ. What does it mean that the Father filled Zacharias with the Holy Spirit at this time to speak about Jesus, according to the Word?

2.

How does the work of the Spirit at this moment in Zacharias' life help us understand the work the Holy Spirit wants to do in our lives?

Group Leader Notes: When explaining this short verse, it's important to consider the roles of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father previously promised that He would visit and redeem His people from the eternal consequences of their sin. The Father filled His servant with the Holy Spirit to point to Jesus as the fulfillment of that promise. God's love was demonstrated when He visited His people to redeem them, despite their sinful condition. Be sure to emphasize this point!

THINK ABOUT IT...



The testimony of Luke 1:68 describes the birth and incarnation of Jesus Christ. Scripture plainly teaches that Jesus is God and one with the Father and the Holy Spirit...

1.

How did Jesus exist before His incarnation? Are there Old Testament appearances of Jesus that help us understand who He was before His incarnation?

2.

Consider Israel's history up to Jesus' incarnation, especially the fact that God didn't speak directly to them for four hundred years, between Malachi and Matthew. Despite knowing the extent of sin, rejection, and rebellion in Israel, God still chose to take human form and visit His people. What does this reveal about the integrity of God's Word and the depth of His love?

3.

How does that kind of love differ from the various kinds of love we experience in this world?

4.

Many people seek love from sources other than God. Still, many individuals in Christian churches seek God's love without success. Additionally, many churches today pay little attention to the Old Testament, Bible prophecy, and the nation of Israel. Some have adopted "replacement theology," which claims that God has replaced Israel with "the church" to fulfill His covenants because Israel rejected Jesus. In fact, many "Christian churches" are becoming increasingly antisemitic!

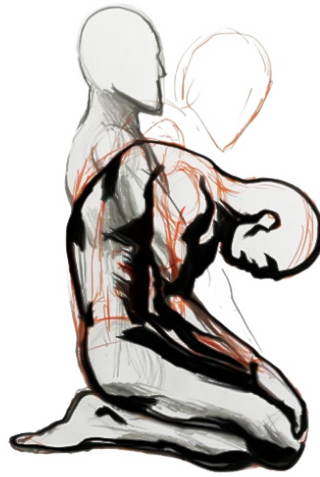
Do you think there might be a connection between modern false doctrines about Israel and the church's confusion about God's love and promises? What steps can we take to protect ourselves from these growing issues?

THE WONDERFUL GOD - THE MAJESTY OF GOD - THE TRIUNE GOD - THE LOVE OF GOD

Group Leader Notes: *It may seem strange to some in your group to concentrate so much on God's relationship with Israel, but misunderstanding or lack of knowledge about this relationship affects how we understand the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

ELOHIM IS...

LEVELING UP



The Blessed One

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will remember that HE is the Blessed One! I may value and seek God’s blessings, but not at the expense of exalting Jesus as the Supremely-Majestic One!

The God Who Loves Israel

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will remember that His love flows from the water faucet called “Israel.” I must remember that it’s impossible to grow in my knowledge of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit without considering His relationship and covenants to the nation of Israel, knowing that His treatment of them is an illustration of how He will treat me.

The Majesty Of God's Presence

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I need to remember the mysterious nature of Jesus' incarnation. He entered the world as a human being while remaining fully God at the same time. Additionally, He stayed one with the Father, who remained in heaven, through the overflowing indwelling of the Holy Spirit. God's majesty is found in the fact that no one can fully explain how this is possible, which is what makes God so trustworthy!

God's Redeeming Love

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must remember that God's love is functional. It's not just an emotion limited to warm feelings. God's love was shown through the revelation of Himself in the flesh to save His people from the bondage of sin and its eternal consequences, just as He promised in His Word. That's what true love is all about, whether we completely understand it 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 8

HOW TO
LOVE
LIKE
GOD

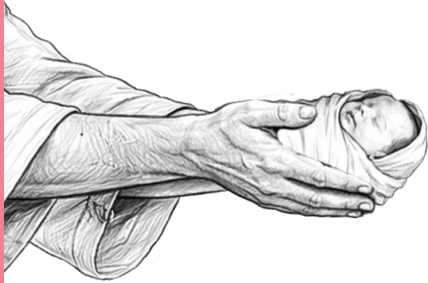


“For God so loved
the world that
He gave His only
begotten Son, that
whoever believes
in Him should not
perish but have
everlasting life.”

- John 3:16

GOD'S CHARACTER IN SCRIPTURE

אלהים



Love is a word used in many contexts, and its meaning has become very confusing. People “love” certain foods, activities, pets, and people. Yet, we all understand that the quality of affection varies from person to person. People “love” differently based on personality, culture, or mood. This becomes more confusing when we consider the statement in 1 John 3:8, which says that God is love. What is love?

“For God so loved the world...”

John 3:16 explains how God loves. God loved the world, and He loved it in a specific way. He demonstrated His love by giving a gift: His “only begotten Son” for a particular purpose. If we understand Jesus’ description of Himself in John 3:16, we’ll see why God “loved” the world this way and hopefully gain a clearer understanding of what “love” truly is.

“He gave His only begotten Son...”

The phrase “only begotten” is “monogenes” in the original Greek. This Greek word combines two English words. The word “mono” means “one,” and “genes” relates to genetics, like DNA. Together, these words mean “one of a kind.” Jesus is “one of a kind.”

How is Jesus unique? He is the "Son" of God. This doesn't mean that Jesus is a younger descendant of God; it means that He is the Heir of God. Jesus inherited every eternally self-existing and self-sustaining attribute and purpose of God the Father. Jesus is God in the flesh. He is the only human being born as God to fulfill all of His own eternally unconditional promises.

"That whoever believes in Him should not perish..."

This means that when God "loved the world," He revealed Himself uniquely to fulfill His eternally unconditional promises. Jesus explained which promise matters most. He came to save the world from the eternal consequences of sin, death, and hell. Love is the revelation of Jesus as God in the flesh. Love is the work of God to die for the sins of the world, giving us a chance to escape the eternal consequences of our depraved souls. Love is God, the work of God to condescend and die to Himself for the spiritual gain and benefit of others, even people who hated Him.

This is the Biblical standard and definition of love. It's difficult to understand why God would do this. It's also hard to grasp how God performed this miracle. Still, the historically documented testimony of Jesus from eyewitnesses like the Apostle John proves that God's love surpasses all other kinds of love and our understanding of it.

MAKING
CONNECTIONS



While the world defines love as a relationship that offers personal gratification, the Bible teaches the opposite, highlighting love as God's way to address sin. Consider these verses in light of John 3:16.

Romans 5:10, 2 Corinthians 5:19-21,
1 Timothy 1:15-16

KNOWING GOD

THE MAJESTIC GOD



"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

- John 3:16

1.

The Bible first refers to God as "Elohim" in Genesis 1:1 to describe His triune majesty through His creation of the universe. How does God's majesty and the involvement of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in creation validate His ability to save the world from sin, death, and hell, and to provide eternal life?

2.

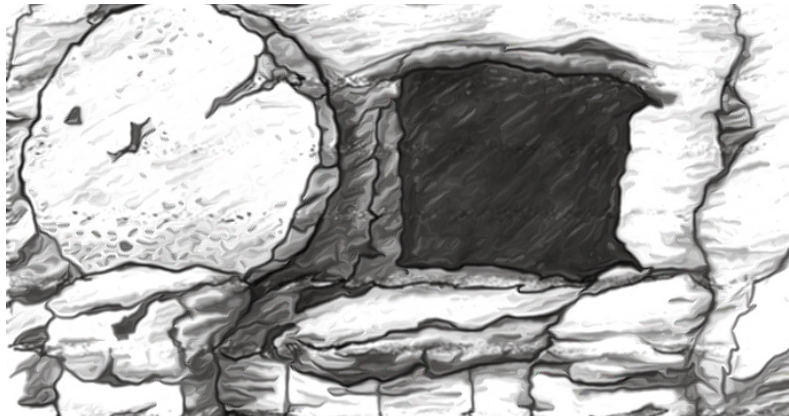
What do we learn about God's love from John 3:16 in light of these two points:

1) That God loved the entire world in a way that spiritually and tangibly affected it, past, present, and future.

2) That faith in the truth of God's love saves us from sin, death, and hell, and leads to eternal life.

How does our modern usage of the word "love" compare to this?

JESUS IS GOD



1.

John 3:16 explains that God loved the world by giving His Son as a gift. In the original text, the term "Son" more accurately refers to an heir. Jesus is the "Heir" of God, having received all His unique attributes as a man. In short, Jesus' identity as the "Son of God" describes Him as God in the flesh. How does this understanding influence our view of love? Can we truly understand what love is if we don't know who Jesus really is?

2.

Knowing that many false versions of love exist in the world, how can we be sure we've received God's gift if we can't recognize its packaging in Christ?

3.

How can we grow in our faith and knowledge of who Jesus is?

Group Leader Notes: *One of the most significant challenges facing our modern church is the confusion and false teachings about "love." This has allowed false teachers and corrupt "churches" to embrace sinful lifestyles rooted in sexual immorality, including the LGBTQ movement, as acceptable. Many "churches" not only affirm these sins but also promote them. The key to addressing these distorted versions of love is to deepen our understanding of who Jesus truly is as the Son of God and Messiah of Israel through the whole testimony of scripture, along with careful and responsible handling of the Word, even with familiar verses like John 3:16.*

THINK ABOUT IT...

THE WONDERFUL GOD



When Jesus taught how God loved the world by giving Himself as a gift to save people from sin, death, and hell, He also explained the core aspect of true love – self-denial. In Philippians 2:6, we learn that although Jesus is God, He didn't appear in His full glory. He didn't flaunt His authority or force His power upon people, even though He easily could have.

He concealed His majesty to enable His sacrificial death. Jesus also taught in Matthew 8:20 that He didn't come into the world to enjoy its comforts to indulge in whatever He wanted. Jesus entered the world as a man to fulfill the law and cleanse corrupted souls through the purity of His own blood. Yet, this love was shown while He was despised, rejected, and hated. He endured mocking, lies, defamation, physical abuse, and the shame and pain of the cross. He came into the world specifically for that purpose—dying to Himself for the spiritual benefit of others—and the Bible describes that as "love."

1.

How does this truth about Jesus and love contrast with the false versions that stem from corrupt churches? Does their version of "love" require the same kind of "death to self" that Jesus demonstrated? How do John 3:16 and Jesus' example disprove false forms of love based on self-gratification and indulgence?

2.

John 3:16 has frequently served as a key verse in evangelism over the years. The verse and its reference are often posted publicly, displayed at sporting events, and featured on Christian clothing. However, today, the church seems to be confused about the true identity of Jesus, the Biblical meaning of love, and the promise of eternal life. Why do you think that is? What are some possible causes for this situation, where the church can quote scripture like John 3:16 so often yet still move backward spiritually?

3.

Knowing that God loved by giving Himself in the form of flesh to die for the sins of the world, is it possible to love others without Biblical faith?

4.

If love is rooted in the revelation of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Messiah, where He died to Himself for the spiritual benefit of others, how can we love others if we don't do the same?

5.

Is it possible to die to self as Jesus did without the power of the Holy Spirit? Is there a verse in the Bible that shows our need for the Holy Spirit to die to self?

6.

If we need the Spirit to die to self, how can we truly love anyone without the Holy Spirit and the standard Jesus set?

7.

What does that mean about the "love" among families who have not been born again? Is the "love" in those families between husband and wife or parents and children pleasing to God if it falls short of His kind of love? Could this be part of the reason we see so many broken and families suffering from dysfunction?

8.

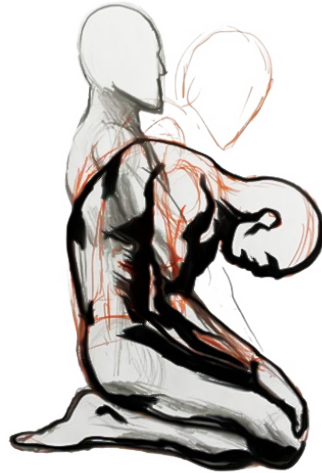
What does that imply for married couples and parents who use their flawed understanding of "love" to justify themselves when they stand before God in judgment?

THE WONDERFUL GOD - THE MAJESTY OF GOD - THE TRIUNE GOD - THE LOVE OF GOD

Group Leader Notes: *This last section can be very offensive and convicting to you and to members of your group. However, the scriptures reveal some brutal truths that we all need to face and address Biblically. This is what makes God's love and character so hard to understand. Not just because He loved the world enough to give Himself, but also because He patiently endures our arrogance and self-righteousness while shaping us into His image. The temptation to be offended or to question these truths shows that God should judge us. But He doesn't. Remember that.*

ELOHIM IS...

LEVELING UP



The LOVE Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will remember that He is God! He entered the world, concealing His majesty, to die on my behalf, requiring only that I believe this is true to receive the benefits of His glory and righteousness. There is literally nothing better than that!

The Unique Majesty Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will remember that God could have addressed the consequences and issues of sin in many ways. He chose to become a man. While I can’t understand how that’s possible, I trust that Jesus knows what it’s like to live in this world, dealing with all its difficulties and tragedies. But Jesus is not like us. He is God. He was tempted in every way, but without sin. He endured the weight of all sin, died, and rose again. There is no one like Jesus, which means I can count on Him, even when I don’t understand everything about Him.

The One Who Fulfills Our Need Of The Spirit

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will remember my need for faith, and that faith comes by hearing the Word. Furthermore, I will remember that the Word is spiritual and must be spiritually discerned. I can’t understand the truth of God’s Word without the Author explaining and teaching me. I need to believe, but I also need the Holy Spirit to be able to do so.

The Eternal Majesty Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must remember that God’s gift guarantees ETERNAL life. The benefits of my faith do not promise comfort and indulgence in this life. Loving others as commanded in scripture doesn’t promise favorable responses from others. I must remember that Jesus accepted the pain and shame of the cross because He knew about the results in the resurrection. His focus was on the results of His finished work. I’ll do my best to keep my eyes on the same prize – the eternal aspects of God’s finished work.

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 hand is shown turning a brass door handle on a wooden door. The background is a warm, glowing light, possibly from a window or a lamp, creating a soft, golden atmosphere. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

WEEK 9

WHY
DOES
GOD
LOVE US?

Jesus answered and
said to him, "If anyone
loves Me, he will keep
My word; and My
Father will love him,
and We will come to
him and make Our
home with him."

- John 14:23

GOD'S CHARACTER IN SCRIPTURE

אלהים



The Bible is full of many promises. The promise Jesus made in John 14:23 is often overlooked or misunderstood. Before Jesus went to the cross, He taught His disciples many important things that explained how He would operate while physically absent from the world. Here, Jesus promised a great blessing to those who love Him. Both He and the Father will come and make Their home with them. Woah!

"If anyone loves Me..."

Jesus will fulfill this promise unconditionally, but there are conditions to receive the benefits of Jesus' work. The recipients of Jesus' promise are ONLY those who love Him. This is the same kind of "love" that Jesus described in John 3:16 – sacrificing oneself for the spiritual benefit and gain of others, including enemies. This is a supernatural kind of love that ONLY comes from God. How do humans love this way? The indwelling of the Father and Son equips God's true people to love as He does. Jesus later explained that He and the Father take up residence in the hearts of His true followers through the Holy Spirit. Since the Holy Spirit is God, His presence fills true believers with the full presence of God. As the Spirit lives within His people's souls, He can reveal His unique attributes, including love.

"He will keep My word..."

This means that Jesus' promise is purposeful. Jesus doesn't just want to be near us; He aims to influence our lives from within by showing His remarkable qualities instead of our flawed ones. That's why Jesus said that those who love Him are those who keep His Word. Those who have truly received God's love are born again by His Spirit, which convicts us from within and guides us to understand His righteousness through His Word, shaping us into His image. This is how we learn who God really is. It's how we come to value God's ways more than our own. It's where we gain the perspective that teaches us to live in harmony with God's eternal and spiritual purposes.

"We will come to him and make Our home with him..."

The love of God requires the supernatural work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit working together within our hearts and minds. That love empowers love. Jesus' promise to love this way explains His purpose. He wants to reveal Himself through His work from within, to glorify Himself by transforming our lives. That transformation is the benefit! God's benefits come through His work to fully consume and take over our lives. That truth shouldn't scare or concern us. It should humble us to know that God wants to make His home with us despite everything He knows about us...

MAKING
CONNECTIONS



One of the most challenging things people encounter in life is understanding God's purpose for their lives. The testimony of John 14:23 makes that clear. Consider these other verses that reinforce this idea to explain God's purpose for us.

Romans 12:2, 1 Thessalonians 4:3,
1 Thessalonians 5:16-22, 1 Peter 2:15-17,
1 John 2:15-17

KNOWING GOD

THE MAJESTIC GOD



Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."

- John 14:23

1.

No one can truly love Jesus without Jesus giving them the ability to do so. Jesus explained this idea using the example of a branch bearing fruit. The first quality of "the fruit of the Spirit" is love. How do these lessons about God's love and its uniqueness show us God's supreme majesty?

2.

If we cannot even love God without His help, what does that say about how much we need to depend on Him?

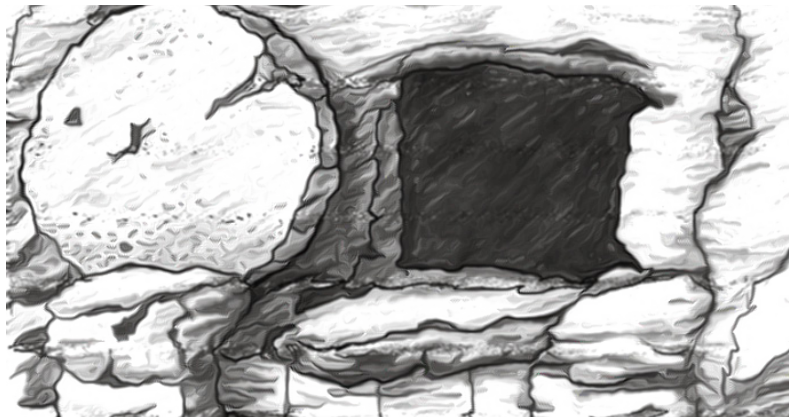
3.

How can we use the spiritual tools God has provided to love Him as He deserves?

4.

What does it say about God who, knowing how terrible we can be, STILL wants to unite Himself with us to dwell with us? What does it say about the Father and the Son that, knowing ALL our faults, weaknesses, and imperfections, He STILL chooses to reveal Himself through His Spirit to connect with us?

JESUS IS GOD



1.

In John 16:10, Jesus explained that His righteousness is unique and supreme as God in the flesh because He's the only One who can ascend to the Father. Can anyone dwell in the presence of the Father by their own ability?

2.

Knowing this, what does it mean that Jesus promised that He AND the Father would take up residence in the hearts of those who love Him?

3.

How can Jesus dwell with God in heaven AND within the hearts of those who love Him unless He's God? What does that say about the quality of love that Jesus described in John 14:23?

Group Leader Notes: *As Christians, we sometimes overlook the details of scripture, missing the power behind its subtleties. John 14:23 is one of those passages where it's easy to miss that Jesus promised both Himself AND the Father would dwell in the hearts of believers — those who love Him. Take time to reflect on the significance of that promise, and encourage your group to meditate on it, especially in light of verses like 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.*

THINK ABOUT IT..



When Jesus made the promise we see in John 14:23, He was responding to a question from the previous verse about how He can reveal Himself to the disciples but not to the world. Jesus responded by drawing an important distinction. He promised to reveal Himself to "anyone" who loves Him, from WITHIN!

1.

Knowing this, did Jesus reveal Himself to the world or just to a select group? How did Jesus practically make Himself known to more people, thus making His offer of the Holy Spirit available to "anyone who loves Him?"

2.

Is Jesus' promise in John 14:23, truly "unconditional?" For example, if Jesus said that He and the Father will make Their home with those who love Him, what is the quality of love that Jesus talked about?

3.

Why did Jesus connect the issue of "love" to "keeping His Word?"

4.

What does that mean for those who try to "love God" outside of the parameters of scripture?

5.

The scriptures teach that love is not just an emotional feeling. God is love. Love is the revelation of Jesus as the Son of God and the Messiah of Israel, who came into the world to die to Himself for the spiritual benefit of others, even those who hated Him. Additionally, the scriptures teach that our sinful nature makes us oppose God. No one has the natural ability to love as the scriptures say. If God is love and we oppose God, how can we live like God?

6.

The testimony of John 14:23 reveals God's desire. He wants to dwell with His people, but we must "love" God to have an intimate relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Many assume they can establish an emotional or intellectual connection with God, but that idea doesn't align with the Bible. We need God in us to manifest His supernatural qualities. God must reveal His majesty from within us, reflecting it back to Himself, even beyond our understanding and recognition. What does that reveal about God's purpose for us? Did He create us to resemble others around us or to reflect Him?

7.

How much do we truly know of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit through the testimony of His Word to determine whether we are looking like Him?

8.

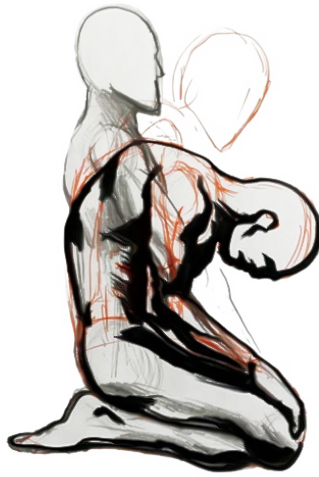
Do our lives demonstrate the self-denial and selfless spiritual focus that flows from Jesus to glorify the Father, as shown by the fruit of the Spirit?

THE WONDERFUL GOD - THE MAJESTY OF GOD - THE TRIUNE GOD - THE LOVE OF GOD

Group Leader Notes: *While this final series of questions can be convicting, this section is meant to remind us that it's impossible to "love God" solely through our own efforts or personal standards. It's crucial to emphasize our need to rely on the LORD through the testimony of His Word, with humility, understanding that God's love is beyond our comprehension. If we can't fully grasp the love we've already received, we certainly can't produce the love we are supposed to show from within ourselves.*

ELOHIM IS...

LEVELING UP



The LOVE Of Jesus

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will remember that the love I must show for Jesus must come from Jesus, who IS love! Loving Jesus means that Jesus is already in my life, manifesting His majesty to glorify Himself, despite my understanding.

The Word Of LOVE

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will remember that God’s love is defined by His Word—nothing more, nothing less. I do not have the liberty to create my own version of love. I cannot love God while neglecting His Word or living in ways that contradict it.

The Indwelling Of Father, Son, And Holy Spirit

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will remember that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit means that the Father and Son are within me! This is true whether it feels true or not. It's true because God's Word says so.

The Majesty Of God

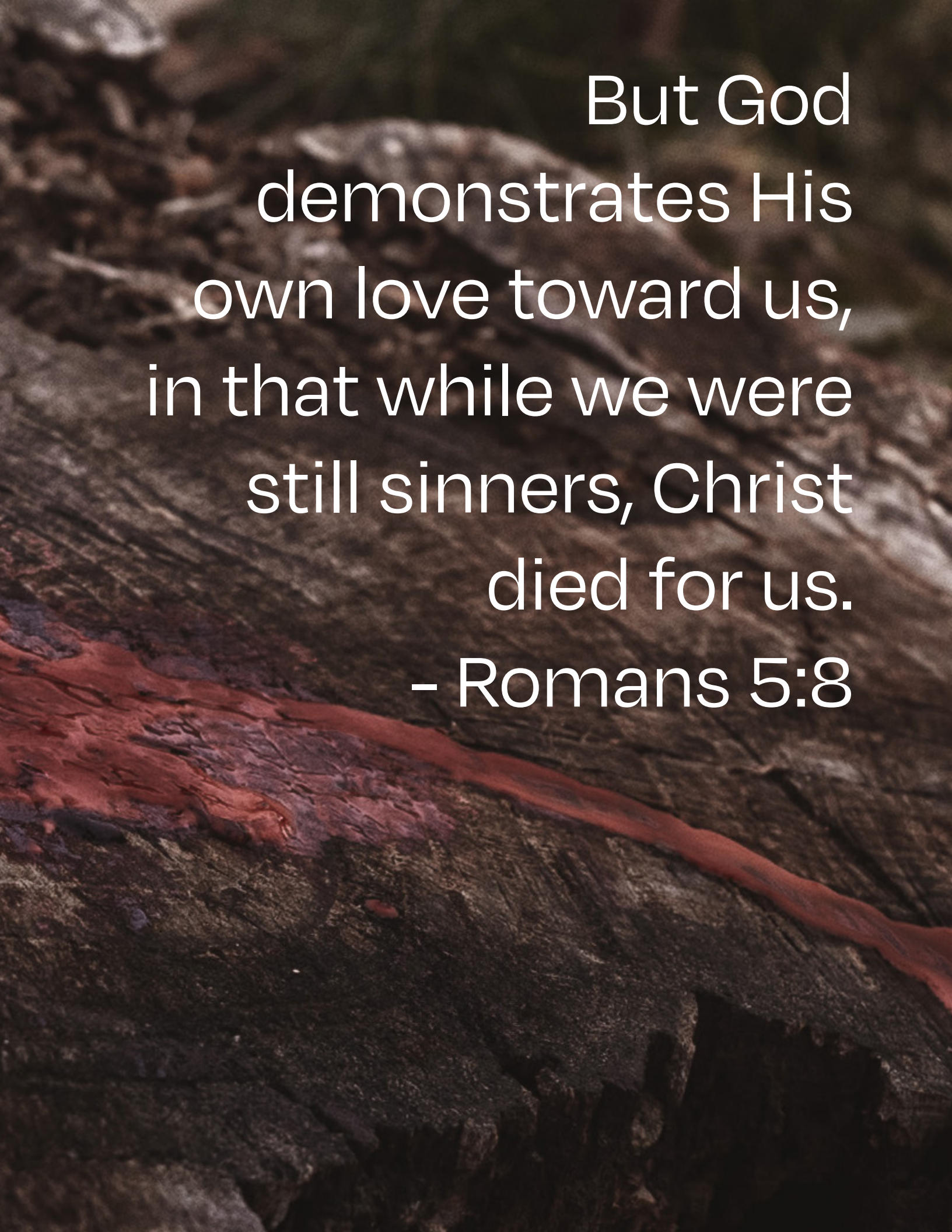
To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I will remember that God desires to nurture an intimate relationship with me. That's His purpose for my life – to use me as an instrument to glorify Himself by displaying His character, nature, attributes, and integrity through every aspect of my life, from within. This is true because God said so, and I believe it whether or not I understand it.

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 10

GOD'S
DEMO



But God
demonstrates His
own love toward us,
in that while we were
still sinners, Christ
died for us.
- Romans 5:8

GOD'S CHARACTER IN SCRIPTURE

אלהים



The love of God is hard to fully understand. The Bible says that God is love. But, the world is filled with darkness and hatred. Many people grow up in harsh environments and have never known any kind of love. What about when God displays anger and wrath? How can we understand all these parts to see that God's love is true?

One of the most important considerations is the meaning of "love" in the Bible. Unfortunately, the meaning of the word "love" has become quite subjective. That's exactly why God gave us a physical "demonstration" to show what His love looks like. The Apostle Paul wrote that God demonstrated His love. This means we can learn the truth about God's love by understanding the "demonstration" that He provided.

*"But God demonstrates
His own love..."*

The word describing God's "demonstration" of love literally means "to set one with another." God placed His love among us, referring to the incarnation of Jesus. Since Jesus is God in the flesh, His incarnation was God fulfilling His promise to dwell with His people. This is why the angel told Mary that Jesus would be called "God with us" when he announced Jesus' birth in Matthew 1:23. Jesus was the physical manifestation of God as love, directed toward humanity.

What did God's love look like when Jesus entered the world? Jesus died for us. The text says that "Christ" died for us. Describing Jesus as "Christ" highlights His death within a Messianic context. It shows that Jesus' death was foretold in scripture as the Father's predetermined plan. Jesus' incarnation was intentional. His life was purposeful. His death was not an accidental tragedy. It was part of God's plan to save souls from hell. God's love is demonstrated by His willingness to humble Himself from His throne of glory to become a man, face all temptation while remaining perfect, and then die for the souls of sinners.

"While we were still sinners, Christ died for us..."

Romans 5:8 highlights that Jesus died "while" we were still sinners. Jesus didn't die for people who deserved His forgiveness and blessing. He died for those who didn't believe in Him, people who rejected, abandoned, and hated Him. Since Jesus is the holy and righteous God, His death for sinners means He died for His enemies—those opposed to Him. He sacrificed Himself to give spiritual benefits to those who fall far short of His glory. God took on human form to show us this example—the ultimate standard of love.

MAKING
CONNECTIONS



One of the main reasons God is so incomprehensible and different from us is His demonstration of love. Humans usually "love" those who will reciprocate and provide benefits to us for our affection. God's love is much different! Consider these verses and how the Scriptures describe the subjects of God's love to better understand His unique majesty.

Isaiah 53:6, Matthew 18:12-14, Acts 3:13-15,
1 Peter 3:18

KNOWING GOD

THE MAJESTIC GOD



But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

- Romans 5:8

1.

The testimony of Romans 5:8 begins with the word "but" to show a point of contrast. This explains that God's love is MUCH different than the type of love humans usually give and receive. Although people were created in the image of God, with a triune nature comprising body, mind, and soul, these parts of our being are not perfectly unified as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are. How does God's perfectly unified triune nature enable Him to love differently than humans do?

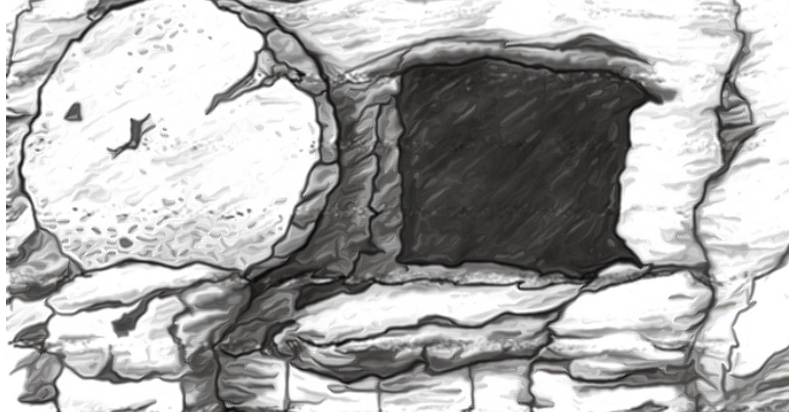
2.

How does Jesus' testimony demonstrate the perfect unity between Himself, the Father, and the Spirit to show the perfection of His love?

3.

God "demonstrated" His love by positioning Himself with His people physically, even as they acted as His enemies, without any benefit to Himself. How does this idea teach us about the royal power of God's faithfulness as the essence of "love"?

JESUS IS GOD



1.

The text in Romans 5:8 explicitly states that "Christ died for us." Referring to Jesus as "Christ" highlights His "Messianic" identity. The term "Christ" originates from the Hebrew word "Messiah." The Hebrew "Messiah" translates to the English phrase "Anointed One." This title describes the One whom the Father appointed to spiritually and practically fulfill ALL of His eternally unconditional promises recorded in scripture. With this in mind, why is it so important to understand God's triune nature – that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are ALL "God"?

2.

Does Jesus' death provide any value for anyone if He's not God? Would Romans 5:8 still be true if Jesus isn't God? In other words, if Jesus isn't God, did God show His love by placing Himself with His people to die for the sins of the world?

Group Leader Notes: While examining the details of the original language may seem like an overly intellectual or intimidating approach to the Bible, it's essential to explain how the language provides its own "apologetics" argument for the deity of Jesus. Many people believe that the scriptures do not call Jesus God. This verse clearly refutes that point upon close examination.

THINK ABOUT IT...

THE WONDERFUL GOD



When Jesus died, He was mocked, beaten, and scourged. He was stripped and publicly humiliated. His beard was plucked from His face. The life of a murderer was spared instead of His. His righteousness and innocence were proven and declared multiple times, yet He ultimately ended up dragging His cross to Calvary and hung on a tree for hours until He gave up His life.

As the Messiah, Jesus knew all of this would happen, and yet He was willing to give up His comfort, His freedom, and His life to save His enemies from sin, death, and hell.

1.

How does God's reaction to mistreatment differ from ours?

2.

What is your natural reaction when someone treats you cruelly, spitefully, or unfairly? Can you even imagine a situation where you would offer your comfort, freedom, and your life to the person you despise the most?

3.

In Matthew 22:40, Jesus taught that every command in the Law and Prophets relies on two main commandments based on the idea of "love" according to God's standard. Since God's love is so deep and beyond full understanding, how does God's triune nature supernaturally equip His people to do the impossible and love as He commands? Are we the ones who "love," or does something even more miraculous need to happen for us to obey these two great commands?

4.

Are we the ones who "love," or does something even more miraculous need to happen for us to obey these two great commands?

5.

Romans 5:8 states that Jesus died "while we were still sinners." Many people measure "sin" by personal standards rather than Biblical ones, so they figure that Jesus' death was intended to benefit certain types of people. The Biblical definition of sin means "to miss the mark." How does the testimony of God's love prove that ALL people "miss the mark"?

6.

The greatest command in all of scripture requires all people to "love God." Can we hit "the mark" of God's love?

7.

Do our hearts, minds, and souls always align with His holy purposes and righteousness without deviation, despite the difficulty of our service towards Him?

8.

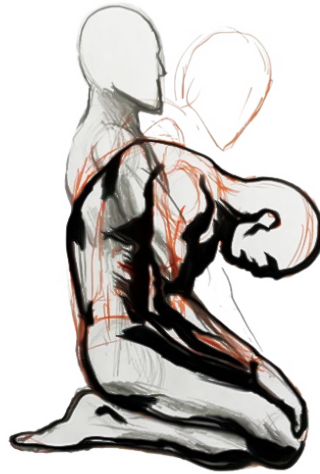
Can we place ourselves together with Him to provide benefits on the platform of selfless mercy, grace, and faithfulness?

THE WONDERFUL GOD - THE MAJESTY OF GOD - THE TRIUNE GOD - THE LOVE OF GOD

Group Leader Notes: *This final set of questions is more rhetorical than straightforward. However, it's worth examining the complete impossibility of these answers to understand the extent of God's unfathomable majesty.*

ELOHIM IS...

LEVELING UP



The Unique Majesty Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must remember that God is unlike me or anyone else. His perspective, motives, and His love are entirely different from human nature – and that’s a good thing!

The Intimacy Of God’s Love

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must remember that He didn’t demonstrate love from a distance. He didn’t resolve the issues of sin from afar. He humbled Himself by taking the form of a bondservant to get close and personal with the people He sought to make His own. I need to remember that God places Himself among His people, so He’s always with me, whether I feel that’s true or not.

The Direction Of God's Love

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must remember that Jesus didn't come into the world to choose only certain elite or qualified people to be His. He poured out His love toward sinners so that anyone who believes can receive the benefits of His character, nature, purposes, and promises.

The Plan For God's Love

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I need to understand His identity as “the Christ” as explained in the Bible BEFORE He was made incarnate. The scriptures are full of Messianic qualifiers, purposes, and prophecies that reveal the essence of who Jesus is. If I want to appreciate God's love, walk in God's love, and share God's love, I must know who He is as love, as it is written from Genesis to Revelation.

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 11
KNOWING
THE
UNKNOW
ABLE

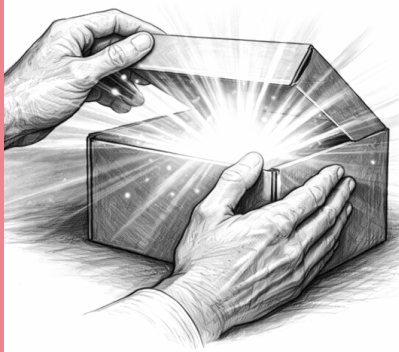


And without controversy
great is the mystery
of godliness: God was
manifested in the flesh,
justified in the Spirit,
seen by angels, preached
among the Gentiles,
believed on in the world,
received up in glory.

- 1 Timothy 3:16

GOD'S CHARACTER IN SCRIPTURE

אלהים



The Bible recognizes that God is mysterious, suggesting that some parts of Him are hidden or secret. To understand God, we need to learn about Him through the tools He has given us. If some aspects of God are hidden, only He can reveal them. If certain things about God are a mystery, only God can reveal them. Unless we approach God as He has prescribed, we will never fully understand the truth about His "mysteries."

*"God was manifested
in the flesh..."*

1 Timothy 3:16 clearly shows how to understand the truth about God by sharing the testimony of His work. God was revealed in the flesh. God's will and purpose, as shown in the scriptures, became flesh. The mind of God was physically displayed. The truth of God—His identity, character, integrity, purposes, and promises—was made visible through the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.

“Justified in the Spirit...”

How can we be sure that’s true? Jesus was justified in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit “showed, exhibited, displayed, and declared” the truth of Jesus’ identity. This happened at the start of His public ministry, when He was baptized, and many witnesses saw the Spirit descend from heaven and rest on Him. Jesus was uniquely filled with the Holy Spirit to perform miracles as God in human form throughout His ministry, and the miracle witnessed at His baptism proved this. Angels—both good and evil—recognized and acknowledged Jesus. They were sent to announce His birth and ministered to Him during His temptation in the wilderness. Demons openly confessed Jesus’ authority and feared Him. Gentiles learned the truth about Jesus when God’s church, which was initially Jewish, preached to them. Gentiles heard and believed in the testimony of the Jewish Messiah and received the same Spirit’s power that equipped Jesus’ original disciples. As a result, people worldwide have come to faith.

“Believed on in the world, received up in glory...”

While understanding the truth about God is difficult, He makes it clear. He revealed the truth through His Word, which became flesh. That is how God chose to reveal Himself. This is the only way we can learn. The hidden parts of God are uncovered only through the details of the testimony outlined in 1 Timothy 3:16. God is exactly who He claims to be. His promises are true, as confirmed by overwhelming evidence. Still, the evidence of God’s mysteries is found in just one place...

MAKING
CONNECTIONS



The Bible teaches that God is “wonderful,” which means He’s impossible to fully understand. Any understanding we gain about God must come from Him according to His predetermined plan. Read the following verses to see how the scriptures demonstrate that God is the One who controls how much we know of Him, and by what means we learn.

Matthew 13:11, Romans 16:25, Ephesians 1:9

KNOWING GOD

THE MAJESTIC GOD



And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.

- 1 Timothy 3:16

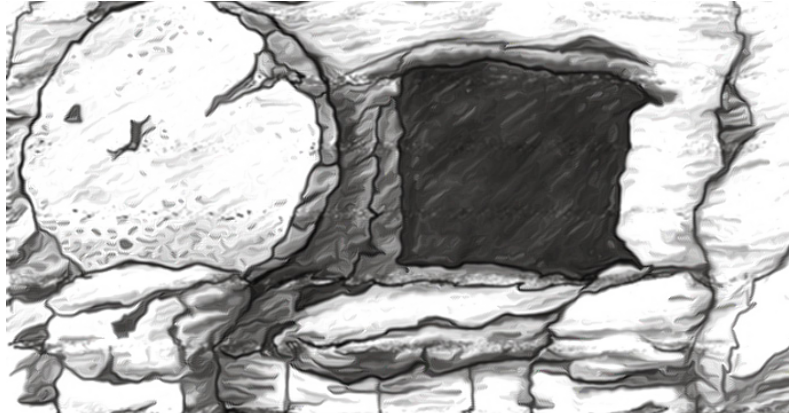
1.

Although the basic facts and events of Jesus' life are simple in principle, they are impossible to fully understand. Those who lived during Jesus' time and witnessed His miracles could attest to His unusual power and authority. However, not all witnesses understood His true identity as God. This shows that seeing is NOT always believing. There are core truths about God that He hides and will not reveal to those who approach Him with self-righteous unbelief. What does this reveal about God's power, control, and majesty?

2.

People often say that God works in mysterious ways. According to the Bible, God's "mysterious" nature entails that certain aspects of God are hidden. However, the testimony of 1 Timothy 3:16 states that God reveals this mystery in a particular way – the testimony of Jesus Christ. Since the Father decided to reveal Himself this way, why is it important to trust in the triune nature of God, where Jesus Christ is God in the flesh? And what role does the Holy Spirit play in God's process of revelation?

JESUS IS GOD



1.

One challenge many people face in understanding the triune nature of God is that they find it hard to believe that Jesus IS God. Some claim the Bible never refers to Jesus as God, yet the testimony of 1 Timothy 3:16 clearly shows otherwise. God was manifested in the flesh.

How do the details of Jesus' testimony mentioned in 1 Timothy 3:16 prove Jesus is God in the flesh?

Group Leader Notes: *The details of Jesus' testimony outlined in 1 Timothy 3:16 offer great opportunities to explore other parts of scripture that demonstrate how Jesus reflected all of the unique attributes of the Father. Make sure to take time to understand how the Holy Spirit's justification, the testimony of angels, the preaching of the Gospel, and the Ascension all work together to show that Jesus is the Son of God and the Messiah of Israel.*

THINK ABOUT IT...

THE WONDERFUL GOD



In 1 Timothy 3:16, the Bible teaches that Jesus was “justified in the Spirit.” In 1 Corinthians 6:11, the Bible teaches that believers are justified “in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.” Notice the difference in these spiritual logistics. We need Jesus to gain access to the Spirit of God. Jesus didn’t need anything except Himself.

1.

What does this difference teach us about the supreme majesty of Jesus Christ? How does this subtle detail show that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are both God working towards the same objective to unify believers to the Father?

2.

In John 14:26, Jesus explained that after His ascension, He would send the Spirit of the Father to His disciples so that He could help them understand God’s purposes and promises and carry out those purposes for His glory. How does this demonstrate that Jesus has authority as God?

3.

How does this highlight our need for the Holy Spirit to comprehend God, His purposes, and His promises, and how do these ideas connect to the concept of “the great mystery of godliness” described in 1 Timothy 3:16?

4.

At the end of 1 Timothy 3:16, the Bible explains that the preaching of the Word to Gentiles (non-Jews) and the faith of those who heard the Gospel were equally impactful elements that the Father used to reveal the "mystery of godliness." What does that say about how the Father values our faith in Jesus Christ? What does that imply about our role in His work to spread the Gospel?

5.

Can we love others by sharing the Gospel unless God opens our eyes to the mystery of godliness as explained in scripture?

6.

Since this testimony doesn't mention any advanced education, seminary training, traditional Biblical studies techniques, or experience to understand "the mystery of godliness," how valuable is the knowledge God provides through revealing His purposes in His Word, the example of Jesus Christ throughout scripture, and the supernatural assistance of the Holy Spirit?

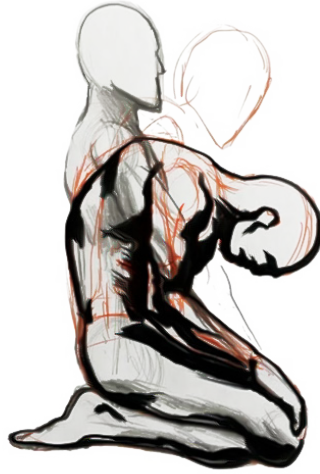
THE WONDERFUL GOD - THE MAJESTY OF GOD - THE TRIUNE GOD - THE LOVE OF GOD

Group Leader Notes: One common objection believers have to sharing the Gospel is that they don't feel "qualified." This is where it's essential to understand the "wonderful" nature of God.

Since He is impossible to fully know and understand by human means, nothing about our relationship with Him or our ability to serve Him depends on any human factor we bring to the table. This is an excellent opportunity to encourage your group to engage in biblical ministry!

ELOHIM IS...

LEVELING UP



The Hidden Majesty Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must remember that knowing God and His purposes depends on His will for my life and the level of revelation He deems necessary to fulfill that purpose. If He is concealing things about Himself, I must rely on Him to reveal them in His way, at His time, and trust that He will.

The Singular Point Of Revelation

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must remember that God reveals the unknowable aspects of Himself through a single channel – the testimony of Jesus Christ according to the holy scriptures. If I want to know God and His purposes for my life, I need to go to the source He provided, trusting that He will make it possible to understand what is otherwise unknowable.

The Revelation Of LOVE

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I need to recognize that God expressed His essence as “love” in the flesh. This means Jesus is the physical embodiment of love, and His fulfillment of righteousness, self-denial on the way to the cross, acceptance of death, and focus on the resurrection are all fundamental aspects that define true Biblical love.

The Unified Purpose Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I need to remember how the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are constantly working together in perfect unity to reveal truth through the scriptures. Since that’s true, I need to regularly consider how my relationship with God depends on my connection to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit through the Bible!

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

ABIDING

LOVE

THE
BIBLE®

Whoever confesses that
Jesus is the Son of God,
God abides in him, and
he in God. And we have
known and believed the
love that God has for us.
God is love, and he who
abides in love abides in
God, and God in him.

- 1 John 4:15-16

GOD'S CHARACTER IN SCRIPTURE

אֱלֹהִים



Many people claim that if they saw God, they would believe in Him. But that isn't true. When Jesus came into the world as God in the flesh, people didn't believe—at least not until Jesus supernaturally gave them faith. The scriptures teach that seeing God has nothing to do with our eyes. Our ability to “see” God depends on a connection that God creates with those who believe. The faith that links us to God is also rooted in His work.

“Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God...”

This section of 1 John begins by stating that no one has ever seen God. However, the Bible teaches that many have seen God and testify about Him. How is this possible? Through the Holy Spirit. God gives His Spirit to His people, enabling them to perceive things that would otherwise be impossible. The Spirit allows us to recognize the truth of God, to see His influence in our lives, His movement, the effects of His work, and more.

“God abides in him...”

How does that work? God “abides” in those who “confess” Jesus as the Son of God. Confession about Jesus isn't just a verbal statement; it means one person affirms the same truth as another. Jesus publicly testified about His true identity and purpose as God in the flesh. Many heard Him and saw His works, but only some believed. What set the believers apart?

John 17:6 explains that the Father gave specific individuals to Jesus as disciples, who were eventually filled with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit's presence created a supernatural connection to God, fostering a supernatural understanding of Him. The Spirit's work in these people empowered them to witness about Jesus based on insights inspired by the Spirit.

If "confession" means affirming what another person says, whom do we emulate so that God resides in us? We emulate Jesus. What did He proclaim? He is God in the flesh. That's what His disciples confessed. That's the message the Holy Spirit empowered them to share. Our "confession" of Jesus arises from God's desire to dwell in us. God takes the initiative to unite Himself with us. This connection fosters the faith we need to please God, leading to our public testimony about the truth of who Jesus is.

"God is love, and he who abides in love..."

How do we come to know, believe, and see God? How do we experience God's love? We must abide in love, just as we abide in God, for God is love. As long as we are connected to God, we are also connected to His love, which allows us to see God's work in our lives and in the world. Still, it is God who takes the initiative to establish that connection through His Word, in accordance with the will of the Father, the work of His Son, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

MAKING
CONNECTIONS



Read and consider these other passages from John's first epistle and how the fundamental essence of love is centered on God's character and nature, specifically through the revelation of Jesus Christ via the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

1 John 3:16, 1 John 3:24, 1 John 4:9-10,
1 John 4:12-13

KNOWING GOD

THE MAJESTIC GOD



Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

- 1 John 4:15-16

1.

In Matthew Chapter 16, Jesus asked the disciples who they thought He was. In Verse 16, the scriptures show that Peter said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Peter admits that Jesus is the Son of God. However, Jesus responds to Peter by explaining that he couldn't have come to that confession on his own. The Father revealed that truth to him. How did the Father plant this truth in Peter's mind so he could proclaim it?

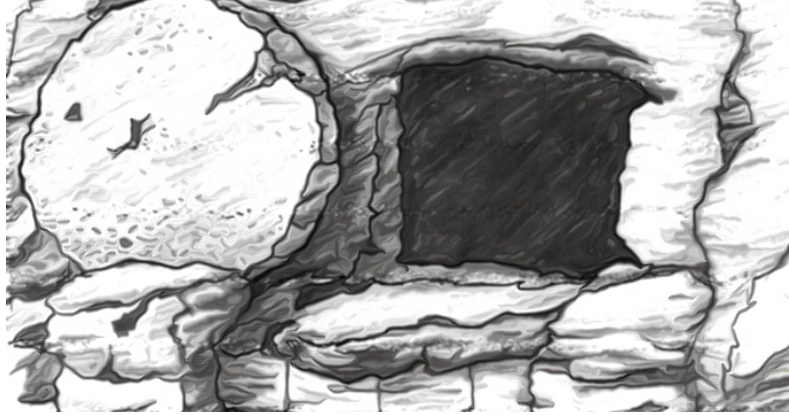
2.

How does our understanding of God's triune majesty help us see where our ability to "confess" the truth of Jesus truly comes from?

3.

Since our understanding of God connects us to His love, can we love Him or anyone else if we're not abiding in Him? What does it say about the wonder of God's majesty that He is willing to "love" those who have no ability to do the same?

JESUS IS GOD



1.

What does it mean that our confession of Jesus as “the Son of God” is the key to connecting with God? What does it mean that Jesus is “the Son of God”? What does it say about Jesus that our confession of Him as the Son of God is the key to understanding the truth of love?

2.

How much time, energy, and resources should we dedicate to learning about Jesus through the Bible?

3.

What steps can we take to strengthen our connection to Him so we can experience and demonstrate His love more fully?

Group Leader Notes: *The idea that it's impossible to love anyone outside of faith in Jesus Christ may be confusing or offensive to some. Here, it's important to distinguish between Biblical love and the false love of the world. Stand firm in the truth of scripture. It is entirely impossible to “love” as the Bible describes without being connected to God, which requires faith in Jesus Christ to be born again by the Holy Spirit.*

THINK ABOUT IT...

THE WONDERFUL GOD



The testimony of 1 John 4:15-16 is introduced with the fact that no one has truly seen God at any time. Although some people saw manifestations of Jesus in the Old Testament and then saw Him physically at His first coming, none of those individuals saw the true and full majesty of God.

1.

How are we supposed to “confess” the truth of who Jesus is if we’ve never seen Him? How does this issue highlight our desperate need for the Word and the Holy Spirit to understand it?

2.

Read 1 Corinthians 1:20-21. How does the Father’s desire to save people from sin, death, and hell through the preaching of a “foolish message” actually enhance His majesty?

3.

How might the testimony of 1 John 4:15-16 concerning Jesus’ identity and our need for Him to know and receive true love seem “foolish” to the world?

4.

Does a person’s inability to understand or believe anything ever keep it from being true? Does the natural inability of a person to know and understand God and the way He shows His love keep it from being true?

To many people, "love" is a feeling. The testimony of 1 John 4:15-16 explains that love is the result of a relationship with God that He establishes, and it makes no mention of feelings. The relationship that scripture describes is based on our faith in the testimony of who Jesus truly is. The scriptures use the word "abide" to describe the relationship that God establishes. The word "abide" refers to someone who makes a particular place their home to remain there. They settle into that space and become comfortable, with no plans to move.

5.

Isaiah 53:6 states that people are like sheep prone to going astray. Knowing this, do we have the strength, wisdom, faithfulness, attention, or desire to establish our lives on the testimony of who Jesus is, and to build every part of our lives on the simple truth that Jesus is the Son of God?

Reflect on how we are called to be children of God according to the will of the Father (2 Timothy 1:9). Consider how we are given to Jesus to be united with Him through faith in His testimony (John 15:16). Contemplate how we are born again and sealed as God's possession by the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:22).

6.

How does the threefold work of Elohim display His majesty in establishing the quality of relationship that scripture describes?

7.

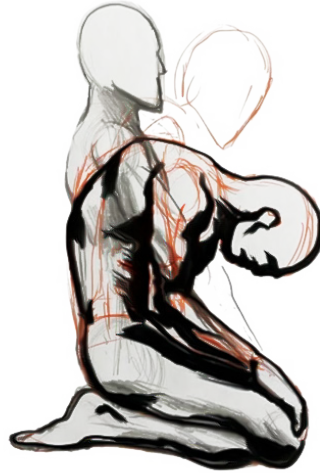
Can this connection be broken if God is the cause and the language is true? What does that say about the truth and power of God's love, since love is the tool He uses to bind us to Himself?

THE WONDERFUL GOD - THE MAJESTY OF GOD - THE TRIUNE GOD - THE LOVE OF GOD

Group Leader Notes: *These final questions aim to accomplish two things. First, to humble us by showing that our relationship with God has nothing to do with us, is established despite our naturally sinful condition, and is guaranteed because of who God is – period. Second, to encourage us that our love for God and others does not depend on our ability or experience. Instead, it depends on our trust in God and the integrity of His Word to do what He says. And that's great news!*

ELOHIM IS...

LEVELING UP



The Unbiased Love Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must remember that He invites “whoever” to receive the benefits of His work. While the LORD requires repentance from sin, He does not expect me to become worthy of His love through my own efforts and merits. He is who He is and does what He does regardless of my past, the struggles of my present, or the perception of uncertainty concerning my future.

The Identity Of LOVE

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must remember that He is God. As long as I stay connected to Him through His Word by faith, I am linked to the essence of true love. This remains true whether I understand it or not, and regardless of how I feel.

The Wonderful Connection To LOVE

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must remember that I can't fully understand God. I'll never completely grasp why He called me to be His, nor how He keeps me rooted in Him despite my flaws and failures. All I can know for sure is that the Word is true, whether I understand God a lot or just a little.

The Triune LOVE Of God

To “level up” in my walk with Jesus, I must remember how the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are always working together to keep me established in Him because that's how God has always worked. Knowing this, I will do everything I can to live humbly, dying to self-righteousness and arrogance, understanding that I have NO BUSINESS knowing a God who can function in three independent ways, while perfectly unified in purpose, as one God! He became a man while remaining in heaven, to die to Himself to establish a relationship within my soul for His glory, and calls that “love.” I understand that it's a privilege to “love” a God who loves like this!

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