

## First Steps 1

### What is God Like?



*Consider: What have you heard people say about God?*

There are many ideas about God. The Bible is God's revealed word about himself, so let's look at what the Bible teaches about God.

### God is One

Some religions teach that many gods exist, but the Bible teaches that there is only one God.



#### 1 Corinthians 8:6

*...there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist...*

The Bible teaches that this one God is the creator of everything.



#### Genesis 1:1

*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*

God is Creator. Everything else is his creation.

The beauty and complexity that is found in the natural world is compelling evidence for the existence of a Creator God.

- The Earth is the perfect distance from the sun. Venus is too close for life (462°C). Jupiter is too far for life (-145°C).
- The Earth's tilt (23.5°) is perfect for seasonal, pleasant weather.
- The Earth's size is perfect. If it were smaller, oxygen would escape (Mars). Larger, and poisonous gasses would accumulate (Jupiter).
- The moon is the perfect size to maintain Earth's tilt and ocean tides necessary for marine life.

Could all of this happen by accident? The precision and design of these facts gives evidence that they did not happen by accident, but were created by a designer.



*Consider: What is more complex: a seed or a computer?*

The answer may surprise you. It's a seed. It's true that the complexities of a computer are impressive, as demonstrated by their microscopic connections and processing abilities to handle incredible amounts of data. However, if you drop a computer to the ground what happens? If it is stepped on, it gets destroyed. If it gets rained on, it will be destroyed. In contrast, what happens to the seed? A seed dropped to the ground, with rain, will soon begin to grow. While humans can make a computer, humans can not make a seed. The seed was created by God for a purpose--to grow into a tree that bears fruit and produces more seeds.

### God is Holy

The Bible says that God is "holy." This means God is set apart and in a category of his own. God is completely pure and perfect. He is without flaw, blemish, error or defect, which is unlike everything and everyone else.



#### Isaiah 6:3

*"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"*

Throughout the Bible, people who encounter God's presence are radically changed. In the book of Isaiah, Isaiah talks about his experience of being in God's presence. See how he reacts to experiencing God's holiness:



#### Isaiah 6:4-5

*And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"*

## God is Great



### **Acts 17:24-25, 29**

*"The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. ...we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man."*

God is independent of everything. He does not live in a man-made temple, nor does he need humans to provide anything for him.

God made everything. God did not come from human art or human imagination; rather we came from the creativity and imagination of God.

God sustains everything. God provides for the needs of humans and all of his creation. He gives us life. He keeps the sun burning, the earth orbiting, and our hearts beating.

God is eternal, wise, and infinitely strong. God knows all and is everywhere at once.



*Consider: How does the depiction of God in movies, novels and manga compare to the description of the one true God revealed in the Bible?*

## God is Good



### **Acts 17:26-28**

*"And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way towards him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for 'in him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we are indeed his offspring.'"*

Though you may or may not have realized it, God has always been near you. Not only did God make you, but he continually protects you and provides for you. God listens to our cries for help and saves us.



### **Psalms 145:14-19**

*The LORD upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works. The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call him in truth. He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them.*

Everything good you have ever had is from God (Matthew 5:45)--sunshine, rain, food, water, shelter, beautiful season changes, good health, strength to work, etc. All of these are gifts God provides to satisfy your heart with gladness (Acts 14:17) because he is good and kind.



*Consider: What is something good that you have seen or received recently?*

## God is Just

Since the one true God is the source of everything good that we've ever seen or received, he deserves our gratitude. While this is true, all of us have failed to give him the thanks he deserves. Maybe you have not even acknowledged his existence and have been living ignorantly by taking his gifts for granted. Failing to honor your creator is one example of what the Bible calls "sin." Our sin separates us from God, who is holy and without sin. The consequence of sin is eternal separation from God.



### **Acts 17:30-31**

*"The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."*

God has graciously and patiently overlooked our ignorance, but now he commands us to turn toward him and give him the thanks and honor he deserves as our Creator and Sustainer.

God will judge the world. God will destroy all that is evil in the world (disease, depression, suicide, war, abuse, suffering, hate, death, etc.). This is happy news if we are among those who honor God. However, if we do not honor God, then we fall under his condemnation.

## God is Loving

Much like a father, God knows everything about you and loves you unconditionally. He wants you to know him for yourself and enjoy his love personally. Because God loves us, he made a way for us to be with him, righteous in His sight. He sent his Son to be our Savior.



### **John 3:16-17**

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."*

The Savior is Jesus. Jesus took all of our dishonorable, unrighteous actions (sin) upon himself and died to remove our guilt and shame. God raised Jesus back to life, overpowering sin and death. The way to live rightly before God and honor him is through faith in his Son, Jesus.



*Consider: We just learned that God is holy, great, good, just, and that God loves you! How does this make you feel? What does this mean for your life?*

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In preparation for the next lesson, take a look at "First Steps: Step 2." Also, if there is time, start to read about the life of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark.