

# PEOPLE POSITIVE

## **People Positive:**

### **Reflecting God’s Love and Truth in Every Relationship, No Matter What, Always**

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# IN THIS BOOK

As you work through this student manual, you'll develop a great reference you can revisit long after this study is complete. The more thought you put into your Bible study, the more you'll get out of it, both now and later.

## Sections in Each Lesson

### Teacher's Lesson Outline

Take your notes here as your teacher presents the lecture. This outline can help you follow along during class—and review each topic later.

### Exercises

This section encourages you to dive into the Word on your own. In general, you'll read a passage of Scripture and then answer questions about it. Verse references will show you where to look for key information.

### Self-Reflection

Here we'll ask you to consider the principles you've learned from Scripture and apply them to new situations. Take a few moments to think about what you've learned and what you believe.

In some cases, you may be asked to write your thoughts on some very personal topics. Consider keeping some of these sections private, and share only what you need for class discussion. You may also wish to record some answers in another journal or document.

### Meditation

No writing necessary here, but this section does encourage you to think about a passage that describes your relationship with God. No matter what our human relationships look like, we can trust God to love and protect us.

### Vocabulary

This section will list definitions of **vocabulary words** that appear throughout the book and in your teacher's lecture material. We've included terms that might be unfamiliar to you or have particular meanings suggested by Scripture. Other writers and teachers may prefer different definitions, so pay attention to ways that people use each term.

## Getting the Most from Your Study

### Class Time

- **Prepare before you get to class.** Bring this workbook, along with a pen or pencil. Try to get some decent sleep the night before.
- **Review the previous lesson.** A quick flip-through of last week's outline can refresh your memory.
- **Take notes.** Don't stop at filling in blanks. Write down your own thoughts and questions during the teacher's lesson. You'll find that writing will clarify your thoughts and simplify future review.
- **Join the discussion.** It's OK to talk. You'll learn more if you stay engaged in class. Go ahead: ask that question—if not *in* class, then at least after.

### Exercises

- **Pick the best time of your day to study the passages.** If you do these as homework, try to find a time and place free of distraction. Play some quiet music or go to the library—whatever helps you focus.
- **Begin with prayer.** Ask God to teach you through the Scripture readings and show you how to grow in holiness.
- **Compare notes.** After you've studied and meditated, discuss what you've learned with other students, as appropriate. Your teacher may want to confirm your work, first.
- **Commit it to heart.** Your teacher may ask you to memorize a short passage from each lesson. You should have little trouble if you write the verses down and review them briefly each day.

The first step to positive study is a positive attitude. Trust that God prepared His truth for you to discover in His Word. By His grace, you can study Scripture—and hopefully this book will help. Seek God's wisdom, and He'll show it to you.

# SCRIPTURE MEMORY

<b>Ls.</b>	<b>Memory Verse</b>	<b>Signature</b>
1	2 Corinthians 12:9	
2	1John 3:2	
3	John 17:3	
4	Ephesians 1:13-14	
5	1John 4:19-20	
6	John 17:15-17	
7	Luke 11:13	
8	Matthew 19:14	
9	Psalms 78:4	
10	Ephesians 6:1-3	
11	Proverbs 1:8-9	
12	Ecclesiastes 4:9-10	
13	Psalms 1:1-2	
14	John 15:12	
15	Proverbs 18:12	
16	1 Corinthians 13:1-3	
17	Matthew 18:15	
18	<i>Review</i>	
19	Matthew 16:18	
20	Matthew 28:19	
21	Romans 16:17	
22	Proverbs 3:35	
23	1 Peter 4:10	
24	Matthew 6:33	
25	Titus 3:1-2	
26	Genesis 3:16	
27	1 Corinthians 11:11-12	
28	Genesis 2:24	
29	Ephesians 5:1-2	
30	Matthew 19:6	
31	1 Corinthians 7:4	
32	Song of Solomon 7:10	
33	1 Corinthians 6:12	
34	1 Corinthians 9:23	
35	<i>Review</i>	



LESSON 1

# WHY STUDY RELATIONSHIPS?

## Relationship

God made us  
to live with

\_\_\_\_\_

(Gen. 2:18).

Scripture emphasizes relationships.

- In \_\_\_\_\_
- In \_\_\_\_\_
- In \_\_\_\_\_
- In \_\_\_\_\_
- In \_\_\_\_\_

WHY STUDY  
RELATIONSHIPS?

Relationships  
are difficult.

God works through relationships today.

- To help us \_\_\_\_\_
- To help us \_\_\_\_\_

Why are relationships so difficult?

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## How do people respond badly to difficult relationships?

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## PEOPLE POSITIVE

### Grace

In Christian tradition, undeserved goodness, favor, or blessing from God

### What does it mean?

To be “people positive” . . .

- We reflect God’s \_\_\_\_\_ to others as best as we can.
- We challenge ourselves to \_\_\_\_\_.
- And we look for ways that God \_\_\_\_\_ in and through others.

### What will we study?

We’ll focus on six major areas of relationships:

- You and your \_\_\_\_\_
- You and your \_\_\_\_\_
- You and your \_\_\_\_\_
- You and the \_\_\_\_\_
- You and your \_\_\_\_\_
- You and the \_\_\_\_\_

# Exercises

## The Neverending Crowds

Jesus' ministry revolved around people. Our Messiah—God in the flesh, the all-powerful Lord of Creation—chose to live among us. Day after day, Jesus reached out to others, even when He felt tired.

- Let's look at just one slice of Jesus' time on Earth. Read the following passages in **Matthew 13-14** and mark the correct ending for each sentence.

**Matthew 13:53-58** - When Jesus taught at His hometown *synagogue* in Nazareth, the people there . . .

trusted Him because of His family reputation.

did not believe Him.

did not even remember Him.

**Matthew 14:9-13** - After hearing that His relative John had been killed by King Herod, Jesus . . .

preached against the king.

spent time with His friends.

went to a quiet place alone.

**Matthew 14:13-21** - When Jesus saw a huge crowd that had followed Him around the Sea of Galilee, He . . .

blessed them and got back into the boat.

felt compassion, healed their sick, and fed them.

condemned them for ignoring His grief.

**Matthew 14:22-23** - When Jesus was finally alone, He chose to . . .

hike a mountain and pray.

walk along the sea.

travel back to His hometown.

**Matthew 14:24-27** - Meanwhile, Jesus' disciples got caught in a storm. So Jesus . . .

prayed for them.

found new followers.

walked out to them on the sea.

**Matthew 14:28-36** - After Jesus calmed the storm and made it back to shore, another crowd surrounded Him and tried to . . .

attack Him.

touch His robe.

offer Him food.



Understand that Jesus was both fully God and fully human—meaning He always did the right thing, but He also felt pain and weariness, just like us.

▶ In Matthew 13–14, how did Jesus show His Godhood?

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▶ In those same passages, how did Jesus show His humanity?

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## Weakness and Faith

Some parts of Jesus' ministry don't make sense, at first. If Jesus was God and could do anything He chose to do—like feed thousands of people or walk on water—why did He let Himself be tired or hungry?

▶ Read **Hebrews 4:14-16** and complete the following summary statements.

- Because \_\_\_\_\_ is our *priest*, we should cling to our belief.
- He understands and empathizes with our \_\_\_\_\_.
- He was \_\_\_\_\_ just like us, but He did not sin.
- Now we can go confidently to the throne of \_\_\_\_\_.  
If we ask God for help, He'll give us what we need.

Jesus became human to show us empathy and hope. He suffered the same kinds of stress and pain we do, but instead of falling into sin, He proved that there's always a way to do right and show love, no matter the situation.

In Christianity, weakness is nothing to fear or condemn. After all, compared to God, we're all weak and helpless.

▶ Read **2 Corinthians 12:9**, where Paul shares something Jesus told him. Summarize Paul's view of human weakness.

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Our weakness reminds us that we need God. To see God work through us, we just need humility and faith.



▷ Look back at **Matthew 14:24-32** and mark the correct answers.

• **Out on the sea, what was Peter willing to do (v. 28)?**

- Throw a rope out to Jesus
- Row the boat closer to Jesus
- Walk out on the water to Jesus

• **Peter trusted at first, but what distracted him (vv. 29-30)?**

- Jesus' instructions
- The wind and the waves
- The shouts of the disciples

• **After taking hold of Peter, what did Jesus ask him to think about (vv. 31-32)?**

- How anyone could walk on water
- Why he doubted
- The danger of storms

We're all like Peter. We have a little faith, but we can get distracted. It's in our nature to fear and to doubt—and in a way, that's healthy. Caution keeps us from stumbling into danger. Storms *should* be a little scary.

But if we want a good relationship with God—and other people—we must learn to trust and follow Jesus. We might take little steps at first, careful of the waves, and we might even start to sink. But as we keep our eyes on Jesus, walking toward Him, He will keep us in His hands (John 10:29).

▷ The writer of Hebrews pictures our faith as a race. Read **Hebrews 12:1-2** and finish the following summaries.

- As believers, we should \_\_\_\_\_ every sinful distraction.
- We should run this race with \_\_\_\_\_.
- And we should look to Jesus, the \_\_\_\_\_ of our faith.

We can't force ourselves to have more faith. We need God to build that up inside us. We can only seek Him, follow Him, and watch Him fulfill our trust. He will lead us to a better, closer relationship with Him, which will help us build better, closer relationships with other people.

# Self-Reflection

- ▷ Think about the relationships you consider the most important. Write down three people—close or distant—that have a big impact on your life.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

- ▷ What about relationships seems difficult? What could keep you from connecting to others in healthy ways?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- ▷ Think about one relationship that sparks some worry or fear. How would you like to improve your relationship with this person?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- ▷ As you work through this book, what are some relationship skills you'd like to learn?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- ▷ Finally, write at least three relationship questions you'd like answered by your study this year.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

# Meditation

▷ Read **Hebrews 11**.

- What things cannot be proven—that is, what beliefs can we accept *only* by faith (vv. 1–3, 6)?
- What did God do through the faithful people listed in this chapter?
- What do we have that these Old Testament believers did not (vv. 39–40)? What truth has God given us to make our faith stronger?

# Vocabulary

- **Relationship** – A meaningful, recognizable connection between one person and another
- **Prophet / Prophetess** – In Scripture, someone with a message from God; a person who shares God’s truth, sometimes about the future
- **Disciple** – A student who follows a teacher; in Scripture, one of Jesus’ followers
- **Grace** – In Christian tradition, undeserved goodness, favor, or blessing from God
- **Synagogue** – A gathering place for Jews to learn and worship
- **Priest** – A person who performs religious duties; in Israel, a man who helped people worship God





UNIT 1

YOU  
AND YOUR  
GOD

# LESSON 2

## GOD OUR CREATOR

### Describing the Iron Age Gods

- Reflected human desire and depravity
- Reinforced a ruling class
- Often bound to a land or tribe
- Unpredictable and unstable

### Describing Yahweh

- Does not cater to our base desires
- Cannot be controlled by earthly rulers
- Created all and offers salvation to all
- Offers promises and keeps them

### Yahweh

God is \_\_\_\_\_.

- He calls Himself Almighty (Gen. 17:1).
- He sees everything (Ps. 139; Prov. 15:3).
- He knows everything (Ps. 33:13-15; Heb. 4:12-13).
- He created the universe and humanity (Gen. 1).
- He shows power over false gods (Exo. 7-12; 1 Kings 18).

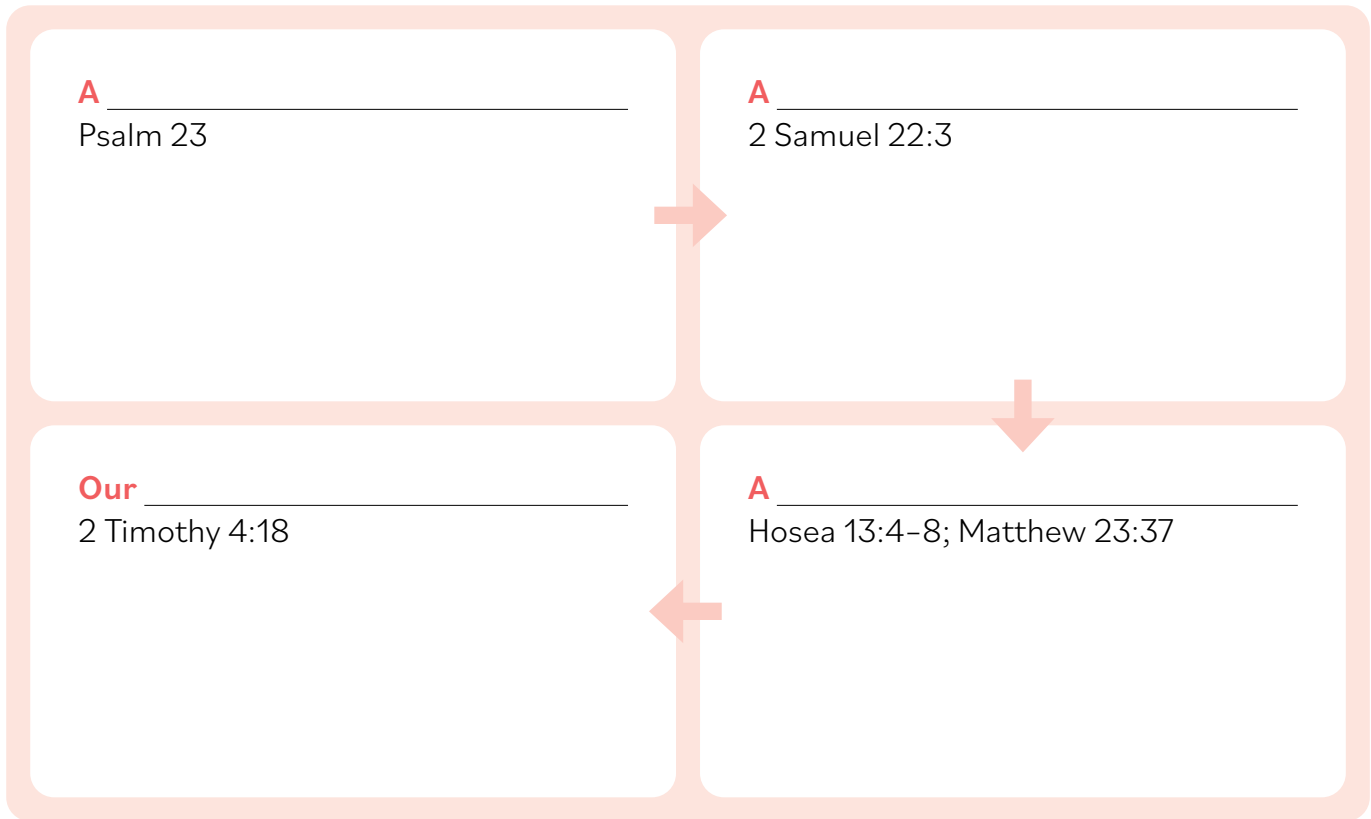
God is \_\_\_\_\_.

- He is \_\_\_\_\_.
- He is \_\_\_\_\_.

God is \_\_\_\_\_.

- From Him comes every good thing (James 1:17).
- He is love, and He loves His children (1 John 3:1-3).

# PICTURES OF GOD'S CARE



## THE GIFT OF GOD'S IMAGE

God made humanity in His image (Gen. 1:27). This gift allows us to have a relationship with Him.

### Different Conceptions of God's Image

<p><b>Image as</b></p> <hr/> <p>The image is inside of us—an unremovable, intrinsic part of our self. All humans are image-bearers, even if they ultimately reject God.</p>	<p><b>Image as</b></p> <hr/> <p>The image is a role or calling that we can fulfill. We accomplish the image by following God or taking control of God's creation.</p>	<p><b>Image as</b></p> <hr/> <p>The image emerges when we have a relationship with God. We can see the image when someone walks and talks with God.</p>
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# Exercises

## God's Image in You

Important to your relationships is your concept of *self*. You can't relate to people well unless you first have an idea of who and what you are.

- ▶ Think about how other people your age form their identity. What things do they base their identity on?

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Different people construct their self-concept in different ways:

- Some people depend on their family.
- Others point out what makes them different or unique.
- And some define themselves by what they do.

These ideas are all part of us, but as believers who trust Christ, we can find a new and even better self through God.

## In the Beginning

- ▶ Read **Genesis 1:27** and complete the following:

- God created \_\_\_\_\_ in His own image.
- God created both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

God gave us His image, even if we don't fully understand the idea. But Scripture does explain that we have a spiritual dimension to our being—something that points to a higher reality.

Just like a painting is more than simply brushstrokes on a canvas, we are more than atoms and cells and organs. Our thoughts can, in a tiny way, reflect the thoughts of God Himself. We can know truth, beauty, and a joy that transcends the physical world. Most importantly, we can know God.

## Respecting God's Image

Yes, we have tarnished God's image with our sin. With our hatred, our lies, and our selfishness, humanity has twisted this likeness into something often grotesque. But the image is still there, and we should honor it out of respect for God Himself.

▷ After the flood, as Noah and his family prepared to rebuild society, God gave them some instructions. Read **Genesis 9:1-7**.

- What did God tell the people to do (v. 1)?

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- What would be the penalty for murder (vv. 5-6)?

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- This punishment seems paradoxical, so what's the reason for it? What makes murder so bad (v. 6)?

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▷ To dishonor God's image, we don't even need to do something so extreme as murder. Read **James 3:8-10** and complete the following summaries:

- No one can seem to control the \_\_\_\_\_.

- Ironically, we can use this to bless \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ and also \_\_\_\_\_  
the people made in His image.

- From the same mouth comes both blessing and cursing. This should \_\_\_\_\_.

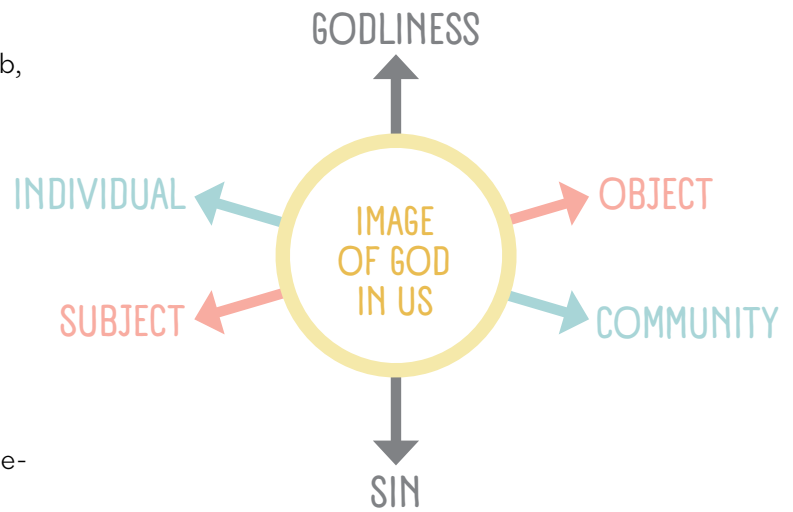
How can we better honor God's image—in ourselves and in others? By imitating Jesus. He is the perfect image of God (Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3), and He showed us how a human could act exactly as God intended. If we love like Jesus loves, we too can reflect God to others. We can bear His image proudly, and we can help other people discover His blessings.

## Identity Conflicts

Many people experience crises of identity throughout their lives.

- We wonder about our own likes and dislikes, needs and wants.
- We wonder how we'll present ourselves to the rest of the world.
- We wonder about the kinds of people we'll build our lives around.
- We wonder what to choose for a job, career, or course of study.
- We wonder how people will remember us after we've died.

Most of these conflicts boil down to three tensions of identity, illustrated to the right. As we learn to recognize these tensions, we can better navigate conflicts and establish a meaningful identity as image-bearers of God.



### Tension 1: Godliness vs. Sin

This will remain a moral conflict our entire lives: will we follow Jesus or will we follow sinful desires? No matter how old or wise we get, we'll always struggle with sin, at least in some way. The minute we think we've conquered sin, we've fallen to perhaps its oldest expression—pride.

► Read the following passages and match each sentence to its best ending.

	<b>Romans 12:2</b> – We should not conform to the world around us, but rather be . . .	<b>A.</b> a new creation.
	<b>2 Corinthians 5:17</b> – If we are in Christ, we are . . .	<b>B.</b> an example to follow.
	<b>Ephesians 5:1-2</b> – We should imitate God just like . . .	<b>C.</b> beloved children.
	<b>1 Peter 2:21</b> – Christ suffered for us and left us . . .	<b>D.</b> commands.
	<b>1 John 2:3-4</b> – We show that we know Jesus by keeping His . . .	<b>E.</b> transformed by the renewal of our mind.

## Tension 2: Subject vs. Object

We have both *objective* and *subjective* dimensions:

- **In a way, we are objects.** We have human bodies vulnerable to weakness, sickness, and injury. Much of our environment is outside our control. We didn't choose our parents, our biological makeup, or our birthplace. These things all shape our identity.
- **And we are also subjects.** We are self-aware beings with a mind and a will. We can choose how to respond to our challenges, and we can use our gifts for good or evil. We can shape our own identity.

▷ Read the following passages and complete the summaries:

- **Psalm 139:13-14** – Here David writes that God formed his body in his mother's womb—and that he was \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ made.
- **1 Peter 2:16** – We believers should live as free people, using our freedom not as an excuse to do evil, but to serve \_\_\_\_\_.

If we view ourselves only as <b>objects</b> . . .	If we view ourselves only as <b>subjects</b> . . .
<p>We hold a <b>materialist</b> worldview, thinking we're animals made of organs, cells, and atoms—and nothing more.</p> <p>We succumb to <b>determinism</b>, believing our choices are the result of biological, social, and environmental factors. We have no freedom and therefore no responsibility.</p>	<p>We fail to recognize the effects of our culture and environment. If we're not aware of our unique background and influences, we may become <b>egocentric</b>, expecting everyone to act and think exactly like us.</p> <p>We may also become detached from physical reality, thinking we can <i>do</i> or <i>be</i> anything we choose.</p>

This tension between *freedom* and *limits* is not a moral conflict between good and bad. Wise Christians will recognize both dimensions and choose to do right, no matter the circumstances.



### Tension 3: Individual vs. Community

Finally, there’s always some tension between our individual *integrity* and our communal relationships. We all have unique strengths, needs, and experiences, but we also find belonging in groups.

- **We are individuals.** God has a unique purpose and plan for each of us. We don’t always need to follow the rest of the crowd. We must do right even when no one else will. By God’s grace, we can stand alone against a hostile culture.
- **We are also members of communities.** No one is truly alone. God gave us families, churches, and communities, and these relationships strengthen us. By learning, serving, failing, and succeeding in these groups, we find belonging and purpose.

▷ Read the following passages and complete the summaries:

- **Daniel 1:8-9** – After Daniel was kidnapped from his homeland and taken to Babylon, he still followed God’s law and refused to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- **1 Corinthians 12:12-14** – Here Paul pictures the church as a body with many \_\_\_\_\_, all of which can work together, no matter our background.

If we view ourselves only as <b>individuals</b> . . .	If we view ourselves only as <b>members of a community</b> . . .
We may withdraw from others, considering only our own wants and needs. We may struggle to find any purpose or meaning higher than ourselves.	We may ignore our own needs. We may go along with whatever the crowd chooses—good or bad—and spend our lives trying to copy whatever group we’re in.

Again, this is not a moral conflict. In some ways, we must think and act alone, depending only on God. But often we should relate and respond to people around us. Godly wisdom can help us apply these perspectives at the right time and place.

# Self-Reflection

▷ Describe yourself below using the fewest, most important words possible.

<p><b>My Heritage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Where I came from</li><li>• What I've done</li><li>• Who I used to be</li></ul> <p>See <b>Genesis 1:27</b> and <b>Romans 3:9-18</b>.</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>My Identity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Where I am now</li><li>• What I do now</li><li>• Who I am now</li></ul> <p>See <b>Romans 5:6-10</b> and <b>8:14-17</b>.</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>My Destiny</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Where I'm going</li><li>• What I hope to do</li><li>• What I hope to be</li></ul> <p>See <b>1 John 3:2-3</b> and <b>1 Corinthians 13:11-12</b>.</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

# Meditation

▷ Read **1 John 3**.

- For believers, what part of our destiny is certain (vv. 2, 23–24)?
- If we choose to abide in Christ, what will we put away (vv. 4–6)?
- If we choose to follow Christ’s example, what will we do instead (vv. 11, 16)?

# Vocabulary

- **Yahweh** – Term used in the Hebrew Bible to refer to God; means “I am”
- **Covenant** – A strong, binding promise, often between two parties
- **Sovereignty** – In Scripture, God’s absolute control over all things, despite acts of evil and rebellion against Him
- **Holiness** – In Scripture, a word to describe God’s unique perfection and exaltation
- **Sin** – The rejection of God and His goodness; disobeying God’s commands
- **Materialism** – The view that all things can be explained by physical processes and that no spiritual realms exist
- **Determinism** – The view that all events and choices are actually dictated by natural processes or a higher will, and that individuals have no true freedom
- **Egocentrism** – The attempt to understand others entirely through our own experiences and values; an unwillingness to accept that other people think and feel differently than we do
- **Integrity** – The commitment to personally held beliefs and morality; intrinsic strength

## LESSON 3

# GOD OUR SAVIOR

### Messiah

An “\_\_\_\_\_,” or someone chosen to fulfill a special purpose; in Scripture, the Savior Jesus

**His Purpose:** \_\_\_\_\_

Ultimately, Jesus came to Earth to connect us back to God.

**His Identity:** \_\_\_\_\_

- He is the Son of God (Matt. 14:33), meaning He is of the same “essence” as God.
- He is one of the Trinity (John 1:1-18; Col. 2:9)

### The Trinity

A word referring to three equally divine Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—existing as one unified God

**His Ministry:** \_\_\_\_\_

- Jesus taught people about God.
- Jesus corrected religious leaders.
- Jesus fed the hungry and healed the sick.
- Jesus trained disciples.

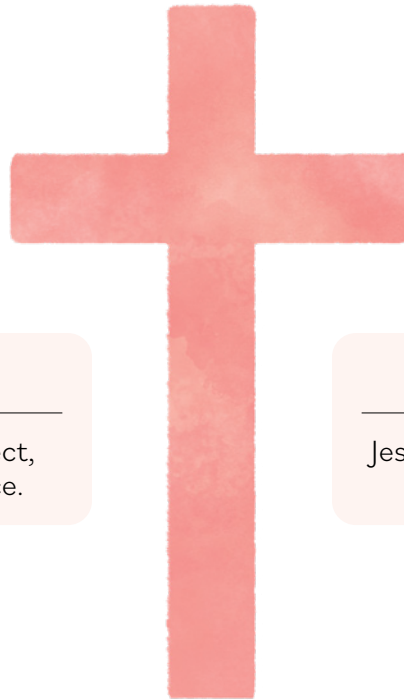
**His Sacrifice:** \_\_\_\_\_

- He became our sin and endured our punishment for us (2 Cor. 5:21; Matt. 27:46).
- But He rose again, showing power over sin and death (Luke 24:5-7).

## The Gospel of Christ

- We are lost and powerless in our sin. We deserve death, judgment, and separation from God (Rom. 3:23).
- But Jesus died to pay for our sin, and He rose to show His power over death (1 Cor. 15:3-4, 56-57).
- If we trust Jesus—if we accept His sacrifice for our sin—God will forgive us and consider us righteous (Acts 16:31; Rom. 3:22).
- We who have trusted Jesus no longer need to fear punishment for our sin (Rom. 6:23).
- Instead, we can now live in a way that is holy and acceptable to God (Rom. 12:1).

## THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL



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Jesus is the perfect, spotless sacrifice.

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Jesus won victory over death and sin.

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Jesus offers us freedom and family.

# Exercises

## The Ministry of Jesus

▷ You may already know a lot about the teaching and miracles of Jesus, but to refresh your memory, look through the following passages in Matthew and match each sentence to its best ending.

<b>Matthew 4:17</b> - Jesus told people to turn from their sins because . . .	<b>A.</b> a man who was paralyzed.
<b>Matthew 5:1-12</b> - Jesus taught that God's kingdom belonged to . . .	<b>B.</b> He would die and rise again.
<b>Matthew 7:12</b> - Jesus challenged people to do for others . . .	<b>C.</b> hypocritical false prophets and teachers.
<b>Matthew 7:15-17</b> - Jesus warned His followers against . . .	<b>D. <i>parables</i></b> —that is, brief stories with a lesson.
<b>Matthew 9:1-8</b> - To show His power, Jesus healed and forgave . . .	<b>E.</b> the God of Israel.
<b>Matthew 13:1-3</b> - Jesus often taught using . . .	<b>F.</b> the kingdom of heaven was coming soon.
<b>Matthew 15:29-31</b> - When Jesus healed many people, they praised . . .	<b>G.</b> the Messiah, the Son of God.
<b>Matthew 16:21</b> - Jesus warned His disciples that . . .	<b>H.</b> those who showed love, humility, gentleness, and mercy.
<b>Matthew 26:63-66</b> - When arrested and questioned by the high priest, Jesus acknowledged that He was . . .	<b>I.</b> what they wished others would do for them.

To minister means to serve, and Jesus surprised everyone by dedicating His time on Earth to service. He was supposed to be a king, but He acted like no other king has. Day after day, as His followers slowly realized His identity as Messiah and Son of God, He continued to show gentleness and humility—even taking time to wash His disciples' feet on the night before He died.

- ▶ Read **John 13:12-17** and summarize why Jesus served His disciples in such a menial way.

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We can't do everything Jesus did, and our own ministry will look very different. But everything we do should reflect this same kind of love.

## The Sacrifice of Jesus

As the Creator God Himself, Jesus designed the laws of right and wrong. He alone decides whether we are perfectly righteous or we deserve eternal punishment. Yet because He loves us, He bore all the punishment that we deserve. He chose to take all the consequences of sin on Himself.

- ▶ Read **Matthew 27:24-61** and in the following table, briefly describe the suffering that Jesus endured for our sake.

<b>v. 26</b>	<hr/> <hr/>
<b>vv. 28-30</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>v. 31</b>	<hr/> <hr/>
<b>v. 35</b>	<hr/> <hr/>
<b>vv. 37-44</b>	<hr/> <hr/>
<b>vv. 46-50</b>	<hr/> <hr/>

In this passage, we see just a glimpse of what we deserve without God—pain, derision, and separation from Him. But as we read this horrific account, we can begin to appreciate God's love for us. We see how far He went to redeem us back to Himself.



► Read **Matthew 28:1-7**. Did sin and death defeat Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

By rising again, Jesus showed His power to save us from sin and death. We don't deserve this gift, but He offers it out of love. To accept it, we simply believe in the *Lord Jesus Christ* (Acts 16:29-31).

- **Jesus**—because He is the real, historical figure who died and rose from the dead
- **Christ**—because He is the Anointed One sent to save us from sin
- **Lord**—because He is God our Ruler, who deserves our worship and obedience, who has the standing to forgive us when we ask

We trust God to make us righteous. Our actions do nothing—He simply saves and grows those who ask.



# Self-Reflection

For this section, take some time to think about your spiritual journey thus far. Answer the following questions as best you can, even if you don't remember some of the details. No one's story is the same, so don't worry if your memories don't sort neatly into the questions below.

- ▶ How would I describe myself before accepting Christ?

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- ▶ Who helped turn me toward God?

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- ▶ How did I accept Christ? What prompted the decision, and what followed?

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- ▶ How do I enjoy helping others now? What am I good at? What skills would I like to develop in the future?

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- ▶ What struggles in my life most concern me now? What things still don't make sense?

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- ▶ Where can I go for advice? What resources has God given me? Who can listen or help?

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By answering these questions, you've begun to meditate on God's work in your life. Your story has just begun to take shape, but even now you should be able to see God's grace on display.

## Meditation

- ▶ Read **John 17**, which records Christ's prayer the night before His death.
  - What was Christ's primary purpose in coming to Earth (vv. 1, 6)?
  - Who was Christ praying for (v. 20)?
  - What was His motivation? What blessing did He want for us (v. 26)?

# Vocabulary

- **The Fall** – Humanity’s turn from God toward sin and death; the universal consequences of the first sin
- **Messiah** – An “anointed one,” or someone chosen to fulfill a special purpose; in Scripture, the Savior Jesus
- **The Trinity** – A word referring to three equally divine Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—existing as one unified God
- **Gospel** – The “good news” of Jesus; one of four New Testament books that chronicle the work of Jesus
- **Miracle** – A divinely caused event that does not follow the normal laws of nature; often used by God to mark His presence or approval
- **Parable** – A short story or analogy used to teach a lesson