

STRETCH

Module 4:
Knowing God
Session I- Introduction

God (the Father)



Study of God

- **Theology is the study of God**
- **Christian theology is the study of God from a Christian perspective**
- “Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

• 2 Peter 3:18

Study of God

“Thus says the LORD: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.”

Jeremiah 9:23-24

Study of God

The Spirit helps us understand

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him.”

Ephesians 1:17

Study of God



“Of all the sciences which stir the head and the heart, theology is the fairest. It is closest to human reality, and gives us the clearest view of truth after which all science quests.” *Karl Barth*

God: Who? Why?

Jesus

- Called God “Father”
- Told us to call God “Father”

God: Who? Why?

- What makes God the Father?
- Who is he in character and nature?
- How does the Father relate to the Son and the Spirit?
- What is the Father’s role and relationship with Israel, the Church and us?

Discussion

- What makes a father a father?
- How does this help us understand God?

God: Who? Why?

Alistair McGrath outlines four characteristics:

1. Fathers are human beings
2. Fathers bring children into existence
3. Fathers care for their children
4. Fathers are male

God: Who? Why?

1. God is not a human being

2. God the Father has brought us into existence

God: Who? Why?

3. God the Father’s care for us

“When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. The more they were called, the more they went away; they kept sacrificing to the Baals and burning offerings to idols. Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk;

God: Who? Why?

I took them up by their arms, but they did not know that I healed them. I led them with cords of kindness, with the bands of love, and I became to them as one who eases the yoke on their jaws, and I bent down to them and fed them.”

Hosea 11:1-4

God: Who? Why?**4. Masculine image of God the Father??**

- Greek word for god “*theos*” is masculine
- **However** Bible also uses female imagery – God’s love for us

Discussion

- Is God male?
- Does speaking of God as “father” mean that Christianity believes in a male deity?

God: Who? Why?**4. Masculine image of God the Father??**

- To describe God as Father does not mean that God is male.

“God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

Genesis 1:27

God: Who? Why?**Knowability****a) God reveals Himself**

“For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.”

Romans 1:19

God: Who? Why?**Knowability****b) Jesus reveals God**

“No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him”

Matt. 11:27

God: Who? Why?

Knowability

c) The Spirit helps us

“The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned”

1 Cor. 2:14

God: Who? Why?

Cannot fully comprehend God

“Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.” *Ps. 145:3*

“Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.” *Ps. 147:5*

God: Who? Why?

Cannot fully comprehend God

“Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.”

Psalm 139:6

God: Who? Why?

Cannot fully comprehend God

“The Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.”

1 Cor. 2:10-11

God: Who? Why?

Cannot fully comprehend God

“Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!”

Romans 11:33

God: Who? Why?

“It is not only true that we can never fully understand God; it is also true that we can never fully understand a single thing about God.”

Wayne Grudem



God: Who? Why?

God's incomprehensibility is something positive

- We can never know too much about God
- There is always something more to learn and delight in

God: Who? Why?

God wants us to know him and increase in understanding of Him.

“Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God”

Colossians 1:10

God: Who? Why?

Can Know God

- Although we can never exhaustively know God, we can know things about him and know him personally.

God: Who? Why?

Can Know God Factually

“How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!”

Psalms 139:17

God: Who? Why?

Can Know God Personally



God: Who? Why?

Can Know God Personally

"Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD."

Jer. 9:23-24

God: Who? Why?

Can Know God Personally

“That they know you the only true God,
and Jesus Christ whom you have sent”

John 17:3-4

“We know that the Son of God has
come and has given us understanding, so
that we may know him who is true”

1 John 5:20

Discussion Questions:

- Compare, our earthly fathers and our Heavenly Father. How can our relationship with our earthly father affect how we relate to the God the heavenly Father?
- Why do you think God decided to reveal himself to us? Do you learn more about God from his revelation through nature or his revelation in scripture?
- What are signs of a healthy personally relationship with God? How similar / different is it to relationships with other people?