



# God and the Old Testament

1. "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." (Psalm 46:1)
2. "Teacher which is the greatest commandment in the law?" Jesus replied, "To love the Lord your God with all your heart with all your soul and with all your mind." (Matthew 22:36-37)
3. "For we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28)

**Ask your student about the Nooma video: *Rhythm* by Rob Bell**

## **The Old Testament**

Our memory is one of the things as humans we are lucky to have. Each of us acts today for tomorrow by looking at our past experiences that have made up our life. When we want to know about someone, we ask them about their life story. As Christians, we are bound together by a strong sense of tradition. We often think that our tradition is told through the stories of Jesus Christ in the New Testament—instead, this is the *climax* of our tradition. Our *tradition* is told in the Old Testament.

Though it is filled with our history, it should not be read as a history book, but rather the story of God's participation in history with His people. God's involvement with the people of Israel affects us today as Christians—and continues to affect the course of our human history.

## **Who is our God?**

Our views of God will strongly influence the way we approach life, treat others, deal with tragedy, and make sense of the world.

We can not learn everything we need to about God through one scripture or experience. God is much bigger than that. It will take us a lifetime to get to really know Him and His plan for us.

## Attributes of God:

To help us get to know God better, let's look at His attributes (*a characteristic of a person or being*). While we cannot put God in a box, we can learn about Him by examining His attributes as revealed in the Bible.

- God is eternal. Time began with God and will end with God. There was no time when God “was not”. God is “from everlasting to everlasting” (Psalm 90:2 and 103:17)
- God is almighty. He is **omnipotent**, meaning all-powerful; He is able to do whatever He wills to do (Ps. 135:5-6). He is **omnipresent**, meaning everywhere present at one and the same time; He is one from whom no one can hide (Psalm 139:7-12). He is **omniscient**, meaning that He is all-knowing, with complete and perfect knowledge of things past, present and future (Heb. 4:13); He knows those who love Him and those who do not.
- God is creator and sustainer. He created the universe and life out of nothing. Before God created, there was nothing but God. But, He is a sustaining presence in the universe, meaning He didn't just create and then walk away.
- God is personal and relational. God is not an object or an “it.” He created us in His image and likeness so that we could have a relationship with Him. Among God's personal attributes are love, kindness, mercy and compassion. God is like a parent who cares for and guides us; whose words and promises can be relied upon; who comes to us in times of pain and suffering. One way we can experience this personal God is through Jesus Christ.
- God is love. He wants the highest good for his creation. God's love involves discipline as much as it does happiness and blessing. God wants what is best for His creation and His people.
- God is just. He always does what is right. God is the supreme judge.
- God is forgiving. Though we don't deserve it, His Grace is given to us for our sins.
- God is goodness. Everything God is and everything God does is good. Related to His goodness are other attributes: grace, mercy, and patience.
- God is holy. Completely separate from sin.

## One big question that people ask about God is:

If God is a loving God, why does He let bad things happen? Why doesn't He keep bad things from happening? When you were younger, things appeared to you as either *black* or *white*; but what we find when we get older is that things are sometimes *gray*. Sometimes, life seems unfair and cruel.

God gave us the ability to have free will. He could have made us all so that we were not capable of doing wrong; but He wanted us to have the ability to make choices—which include not only the ability to choose to love Him, but also the ability to make good or bad choices. Unfortunately, some of the bad things that happen in our world happen because of our free will.

Some things are not results of our own free will, and then we have to remember that God is in control and He is our Lord. When a bad thing happens in our life (like a death of a loved one), it is important to remember that God is strong enough to handle us wrestling and questioning why He would let this happen. He is pretty tough. Through prayer and Scripture, we can come through tough times with one of two outcomes:

1. We can come out with a deeper understanding of God's love and care for us; OR
2. When we can't see His love through our pain and loss, we can learn to rest assured in the hope of His victory over evil and death. (Romans 8:18-25; Revelation 21:1-4)

These roadblocks and losses in life can be used to make your faith deeper and stronger. (Romans 8:35-39)

### **Who are we to God? Why did God create us?**

- We are created by God as supreme above all other creation.
- We were created to have free will. God doesn't want to force himself on us. He wants us to choose Him.
- He knows me intimately. (Psalm 139:1-18, 23 & 24)
- Our purpose:
  1. Receive God's love
  2. Reciprocate God's love. Get to know and love God. When Jesus was asked what law is the greatest, He replied, "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.*" (Mathew 22:37) Therefore, it is important that we understand God and also what it means to love Him. The Love for God is not just a feeling, it is showing God our love through our actions and obeying His commandments.
  3. Share God's love with others.

### **What is the Holy Trinity?**

God in three persons. They are not the same person, but they are one in essence and nature. Within the being and activity of God, there are three distinct persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Many people talk about how it is like water. You can have water in the form of liquid, or in solid form (like an ice cube) or in vapor (moisture in the air). Over the next three weeks, we will be looking at each part of the Trinity, but here are some basics:

The Father – There is one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom and goodness, maker and preserver of all things both visible and invisible.

The Son – He is the Word of the Father, one substance with the Father. Jesus Christ who came to reveal God, to redeem us from sins. He is fully God and fully man. He truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried to reconcile us with the Father. He is the ultimate Sacrifice for our sins, so that those who believe in Him will have eternal life. (John 3:16)

The Holy Spirit – the indwelling Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son who calls us to faith and regenerates and sanctifies us.

# Homework

Pick one of the following Scriptures passages to memorize for next week's lesson, write it on a note card and put it somewhere you can see it and reflect on it daily (or use your dry erase markers):

1. *"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you."* (Deuteronomy 31:6)
2. *"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."* (Galatians 2:20)
3. *The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."* (John 1:14)

## **Journaling:**

Read Joshua 22:5 and answer these questions in your journal:

1. *During this week in what ways have you tried to grow in your love for God?*
2. *What things this week has God given to you or blessed you with that show His love for you?*
3. *When was a time in your life that things seemed bad but God gave you hope?*
4. *When was a time you felt close to God?*
5. *When was a time you felt far away from God?*
6. *When was a time you felt like you really needed God in your life?*
7. *Who taught you about God?*

## **The Journey Continues Next Week:**

This week, we looked at the Father (God). Next week, we will be looking at the Son, Jesus Christ.

Next week: *Lesson 3—Who is Jesus?*

*In preparation for next week, read page 26 (in the Student Lesson Guide), "Who is Jesus?"*

## **Family Homework:**

### **Make a Blessing Jar as a family**

Take an old Mason Jar or any bowl and have each member of your family write 5 blessings that God has given to your family. At dinner time, pull out 2 or 3 and share with each other why they are blessings. Take the time to pray and thank God for what He has done for you as a family.