

Introducing God

Goal:

To understand the perspective of God that this teen is coming from, and to help them see the powerful yet personal involvement of God in their spiritual journey. "What I believe about God is the most important thing about me." -A.W. Tozer

Opening Questions:

Explain to the teen that you want to know what they REALLY think. Not what their parents think, not what they think they are supposed to say, but their genuine thoughts. Keep note of their responses, because these will be helpful in guiding you through the individual needs of the teen who is studying.

- When you think about God, what comes to your mind?
- When you think about Jesus, what comes to your mind?
- Where do you think you have gotten your beliefs about God and Jesus?
- How do you feel about God and Jesus?
- How do you think they feel towards you?
- How would you describe God or Jesus to a friend?

How big is your God?

Isaiah 40:12-15, 21-22, 25-26

-Number of stars in the universe: 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 (that's 21 zeros!)

– God calls them each by name, even though humans don't have names for all of them.

* Amount of water on earth – about 326,000,000,000,000,000 gallons (326 million trillion gallons) – God measures this in the cup of his hand.

*God sees us like grasshoppers (and that is probably an over-estimate). What would you do for a grasshopper? How much time do you spend thinking about a grasshopper?

Up close and personal:

***Psalm 8:3-5**

***Psalm 139:1-18**

***Isaiah 49:16**

*Seeing how huge and powerful God is could make us feel tiny and unimportant.

But as important as he is, he cares more deeply for you than anyone else (even your parents!)

*The same hands that can hold all of the oceans have your name "tattooed" into them.

*There are about as many stars as there are pieces of sand (look back to the number of stars).

God's thoughts of you outnumber this amount.

*How does this make you feel? This should bring us a deep respect and sense of confidence!

God has control over all things and is not someone to play around with – but he wants to have a close relationship with you. How do these scriptures compare with what you said your view of God was?

* With these things in mind, what action will you take? Why do you want to study the Bible?

HW: Pray about and discuss your thoughts about God with your family and other Christians, and share a decision about how you will go after getting to know God better, starting this week. Begin a list in your journal of all the reasons you believe in God (current and past situations, specific wonders in nature, etc.)

Seeking God

Goal: Help teen see God as sought them & that they need to seek after a

RELATIONSHIP with God

- How would you describe your closest friendships? What qualities does it have?
- Would you say those same qualities are in your relationship with God? What is missing?
- Do you view a relationship with God as an actual 2 way relationship?

Acts 17:24-28

- Does God need you? (No) How does that make you feel?
- How much energy has he put into your life? What does that show you? (how much God loves and wants a relationship with you)
- We are the ones who are supposed to reach out to God. Are you waiting for God to reach out to you?
- Is God guaranteed that you will reach out to him & love him?
- 1 John 4:19 our love is a response to God's love for us)

Matt 7:7-8

- Does finding & having a relationship with God take work/action?
- Whose responsibility is your relationship with God? Who is supposed to go after it? (theirs, not your's, parent's, or teen ministry's)
- How do you ask, seek, knock? (read, pray, ask) Are you doing those?

Jer 29:11-13

- How does it make you feel to know God has good plans for your life?
- Does it make you want to do anything seeing that God has planned out your life and has great plans for you?
- What kind of effort does God expect from you if you're going to seek him? Does he deserve it?
- Have you been seeking him with all your heart? Do you feel more compelled now?

Conclusion: What did you learn about God? What do you want to do now?

HW: Go back through our study and create your own notes & thoughts. Read your bible & pray every day to seek after knowing who God is. Take notes on what you learn about God.

Daily readings to teach about God: Gen 1:1-27, Psalm 19, Job 39, Psalm 8, Heb 4:12-16, Psalm 139: 13-16, 1 John 4:7-12, Ex 3:1-14, 1 John 1:5-7, 1 Peter 1:15-16, Rom 2:4 & Rom 11:22, Acts 17:24-31

Bible Study

**should be done after the word study*

Goal: To help teen see the scriptures as *God* speaking to them (vs. book) and the usefulness of the bible, how to have quiet times & why we have them

- How are your times with God going? When you are reading the bible do you read it more like it's a book? (point to make it that we need to read the bible as God speaking to us)

Acts 17:10-11

- How did the Bereans study their bibles? Did they take it seriously?
- How did Paul describe their attitudes toward their personal bible study? How is your attitude toward having your quiet time?
- Is the bible meant to be just a book read out of obligation? Why do we read it? (Grow closer to God, learn about it's teaching, guide, etc)
- How can it be useful for you in developing your relationship with God?

Matt 7:24-27

- If your relationship with God is the house, what are the 2 options to build on? What is the rock? What is the sand? Which is better
- Sand=building only on what you have been taught/heard without bible or putting it into practice. What happened to the house on sand?
- Rock=knowing what the word says for yourself & putting it into practice. Which do you want your relationship w. God built on?
- Which is going to take more work? If you want to build a strong relationship with God how do you do that?

James 1:22-25

- What do you use a mirror for? Do you always look great? How do you always know how you look w/o the mirror?
- If the word is like a mirror, how could it be like a mirror?
- How can you use your bible to be your mirror? What do you need to be doing when you read your bible? (examine yourself & change it)
- It is important not to forget what you see when you look into the word. Why? Is your nature to forget what you read? How can you work on that?

Conclusion: What did you learn about God? How does what you learn influence you?

HW: Go back through our study and create your own notes & thoughts. Read your bible & pray every day to examine yourself like in a mirror. Take notes on what you see in the mirror. Study Psalm 119 and take notes on David's thoughts about the word and what it does for him (and you).

How to Pray

Goal: To understand why we need to pray, how to pray, and discuss their current prayer life and ways to grow.

- How do you feel about praying (comfortable, awkward, etc)?
- How are your prayers? What do you pray about? How often/when do you pray?

Mark 1:35-38

- Jesus was devoted to prayer throughout the scriptures he stayed in communication with God.
- He made time to pray, even when we things were busy. Did he apologize for praying? (NO)
- Do you make time to pray? Or just do it when it is convenient. (Jesus got up early if needed)
- We as disciples (his followers) we need to imitate Jesus' prayer life

Luke 11:1-4

- Even the disciples didn't know how to pray, they had to be taught
- Jesus taught them to pray by giving them this outline (vs. 2-4)
- Here is a simpler format that is easy to remember for your prayers: ACTS (will be part of HW)

Adoration: Adore/praise God! This is important for our hearts to recognize how great & mighty God is.

HW: Dt 32:3, Ps 18:46-49, Ps 22:22-26, Ps 117:1-2, Is 25:1, James 5:13, 1 Pt 2:9

Confession: Clear your mind and heart of the ways you have sinned against God.

Ask for forgiveness. This also keeps us humble before God realizing we need his love and grace.

HW: 1 John 1:8-9, Ez 10:1, Neh 9:3, Ps 32:5, 1 John 1:8-10, Ps 51

Thanksgiving: Thank God for all the amazing things in your life. Specific or general.

It is important for us to recognize all the ways God has blessed and taken care of us, especially when things are not going according to plan.

HW: 1 Tim 2:1, Ps 100:4, Col 1:3, Col 4:6, 1 Thes 5:16-18, Heb 12:28, 1 Chron 16:34, 1 Chron 23:30

Supplication: God wants us to ask him for things we need for ourselves or others.

He is your Dad and he wants to take care of you.

HW: Luke 11:9-13, James 5:13, Ps 5:3, Ps 20:5, Eph 6:18, Phil 4:6, Heb 5:7

Eph 6:18

- No matter what is going on, we need to pray. Good or bad, talk to God about it.
- We need to be clear minded and focused on our prayer and time with God
- Do you have a hard time focusing on praying?
Tips: write prayers, pray out loud, pray with others, etc)

1 Thes 5:16-18 & Eph 6:18

- We have to pray all the time. We should walk with God, connected all day.
- How often do you pray? Continually? When do you pray?

Conclusion: What ways can you grow in your prayer life? How will your prayers affect your relationship with God?

HW: 4 days this week focus on one letter of ACTS. Go through the scriptures listed and take time out of your day to pray just about the specific area (adoration, confession, thanksgiving or supplication). The other 3 days pray through all 4 in order.

What is your Dad Like

Goal: To introduce a fatherly perspective of God. View God as your Dad, he is!

- What is your image of your own father? What is he like? What is your relationship like?
- Share about how your relationship with your father influences your perspective of God and that no matter how perfect or imperfect our own earthly father is, God is the perfect Dad.
- On which end of the spectrum do you naturally view God: Gracious/loving vs. full of wrath/judge

Luke 15:11-24

- Looking at this son, how should the father respond? How does he?
- How does this represent you and God?
- God is: compassionate, loving, forgiving, welcoming, generous, not judgmental

John 8:1-11

- Jesus' character is an exact representation of God's character
- How did Jesus treat this woman? Is this comforting?
- Was Jesus just ok with the life she was living? He didn't condemn her so he must have just been ok with the life she was living and let her go back to it, right?
- What does this mean for you? How should you respond?

Heb 12:5-11

- How does this passage say it feels to be disciplined?
- Why does God discipline us? Are you ok with being disciplined? Do you want God to love you?

Conclusion: What is God like? Is he more fatherly than you thought? How does this impact you?

HW: Go back through our study and create your own notes & thoughts. Write a 1 page essay about what God is like based on what you have learned in your past few studies and cite scriptures. Continue read your bible & pray every day.

Who is Jesus

Goal: To understand who Jesus was

- Who was Jesus? What was he like? Where did he come from?

John 1:1-3

- The word, God, and Jesus were one in the beginning

John 1:14

- Who do you think this is describing? (Jesus)
- What does that show us about God?

John 1:18

- What is this saying about God and Jesus?
- If you want to get to know God, who should you also know?
- God gave us Jesus so that we could better understand him and so he could better relate to us.

Heb 1:3

- By getting to know Jesus we get to know God
- If we study a story and see something in Jesus = God has that same quality.

Heb 4:15

- Jesus has been through it all, and he can sympathize and relate!
- The bible talks about how Jesus speaks to God on our behalf because he relates to our struggles.

John 8:12

- What does this teach us about Jesus?
- What does this teach us about God? God wants to give you guidance. He does not want you to be in the dark.

John 14:6-7

- How can you get to God? What is the only way?
- What other quality do we learn about Jesus & God here? (Truth)
- Do you want truth? Why is truth good? Is it hard for us to find today?

Conclusion: What did you learn about Jesus? How can getting to know Jesus help strengthen your relationship with God?

HW: Read through one of the gospels this week. Each day find out something about God by reading about Jesus. Keep a journal of all the things you discover.

Humility

Goal: To understand what pride is & what it looks like; how God takes it seriously; how it comes between you & God; how we are to be humble with others

- What is Pride? (independence, arrogance, thinking your always right)
What are its consequences?
- What is humility look like? Does it have consequences? (see if they think being humble will mean people will take advantage of them)

Phil 2:5-8

- As a disciple we have to be humble because we are imitating Jesus
- How was Jesus humble? How can you imitate that in your life?
- Why is take humility to obey? (you can't follow/listen if proud)

Eph 4:2-3

- Do you think you follow this scripture? Is it hard? Why?
- How is it for you to be humble with family, friends, others?
- How can you work on being more humble with others?

1 Cor 13:4-7

- Being humble is a part of showing others love!
- By this definition, do you think you are loving?

Isaiah 66:2b

- What does esteem mean? What does God want us to be like?
- Do you want God to feel that way about you?

1 Peter 5:5-6

- How does God feel about us being proud?
- Being humble takes action like putting on clothes. Just like Jesus humbled himself, we have to choose to become humble
- What are you covered in? What do people see when they look at you?

James 1:21b

- How can pride get between you and God? What are the consequences of you not listening to God and the bible?
- You must be humble to really listen to the bible
- You have to listen to the word, obey it, because it is what will save you

Conclusion: How do you want to work on your character? Why?

HW: Pay attention this week to how you see pride in your life. Write down before our next study the ways you see pride in your character and how you can work on it

Relationships with the Family

Goal: To see the bibles teaching on how our relationship with our family should be

- What is your family like? Relationships, dynamics (good & bad)

Prov 23:22-26

- Being a good child is a biblical concept! Not just being a good person
- What brings your parents joy? (from the scripture)
- How do you treat your parents? How do you view them?

1Thes 5:12-13

- How should we treat and view our parents from verse? (respect, hold in high regard, in love, peace)
- Why? (work hard, admonish you, over you/authority)
- How can you show them respect? (listen, obey (1st time!), not talking back, thanking them, etc)

Phil 2:14

- We're supposed to do everything without complaining and arguing

Eph 4:29 – 5:2

- There is not a loophole to this scripture for family members (parents or siblings)
- How do you do with saying good/encouraging/building up things?
- What are we supposed to take out of our lives? (bitterness, rage, anger, brawling...) Do you see any of these in your life?
- Replace with: kindness, compassion, forgiveness, love
- Do it for God!

Conclusion: What areas do you need to work on with your family? How can you do that? Why is it important to improve your family relationships? (to glorify God)

HW: Work on relationship with family. Read through these scriptures this week in your quiet time Heb 12:11-12, Prov 23:13-14, Eph 6:2, Deut 5:16, Ex 20:12

Being a Servant

Goal: See the importance of being a servant and being a disciple. To understand how they can serve and that God expects us to be servants.

- Do you think you are a servant at home and in your life?

Mark 10:45

- Jesus came to earth from heaven to serve. How should you be then?

Matt 20:25

- To be like Jesus you must assume the lowest position, last
- What would that look like in your life?

Phil 2:3-8,14

- What is the opposite of a servant? (someone who is selfish)
- Do you think of others over yourself? Or are you more concerned with you? Do you think of their interest?
- If you are not a servant you are selfish
- We're supposed to imitate Jesus as a servant
- Do it without complaining or arguing!

Matt 25:34-40

- Who do we serve when we serve others? Jesus/God!

Col 3:22-24

- Should we serve because we have to? With a small effort or none at all? We should serve with ALL our heart!
- Who are you serving when you serve? Serve to honor and serve God!

Conclusion: Do you think you serve like Jesus served? What areas do you need to grow in serving? How can you do that?

HW: Every day come up with one way you can serve that day. Keep a list/journal

Pharisee

Goal: To understand that action is not enough. God looks at our heart & motive

- Why do you study the bible? Why do you obey?
- God wants us to do more than just do what we are supposed to, please our parents, be good person, etc.
- Who were the Pharisees? They were religious guys whose lives were about obsessively obeying the law. They were religious teachers & authorities. But they lost sight of God, it was about them.

Matt 23:23-28

- How did Jesus feel about the Pharisees?
- How does he describe them? (hypocrites, blind guides, focused on unimportant things, only look good on the outside, wicked)
- What is a hypocrite? Is that a struggle for you?
- What does it mean to clean outside but not inside? Is that a temptation for you?
- These men were most concerned about looking good & spiritual. Their religion became about themselves, not God.

Mark 7:4-6

- So what was the bigger problem between God & the Pharisees?
- Doing things does not mean our hearts are close to God. We have to make sure that we are living for & doing things to glorify God not yourself or for other people

Matt 5:19-20

- We're supposed to be more righteous than those who lived to perfectly follow the law!? Why does Jesus say that? (about them not God)

1 Sam 16:7

- God cares about our heart? He can see our thoughts & motives.
- How do you think your motives have been in your bible studies and putting things into practice?

Conclusion: Do you see any of these things in your heart? What is your motivation? God does not want us just to obey or to do things to look like we are being "good Christians" he wants our hearts & devotion.

HW: Write a <1pg summary of the study about why Jesus & God opposed the Pharisees and how you need to make sure your heart is not like them.

Dealing with the Heart (sin)

Goal: Seeing that God looks at our hearts, wants our whole heart, and how we can examine our own hearts

- What do you think matters to God? What does he look at in us?

1 Sam 16:7

- We look at outward things in other people, but God looks at our hearts
- How do you feel knowing God looks at your heart? What do you think he says when he looks at your heart?

Mark 7:20-23

- Our sin comes from our hearts. One thing God sees when he looks at our hearts was sin.
~ Ex: Murder (outward visible sin) → Hatred/anger (the sin within our heart where it begins)
- We need to be concerned with the sin in our hearts because God is
How to deal with our sinful hearts (quickly go through these)

Prov 27:19 = Our lives can show us things in our heart. Look at your life

Heb 4:12 = The word judges the thoughts & attitudes of the heart.

James 1:22-25 = It reflects how we really look, like a mirror

- Allow the word to judge your thoughts & attitudes; reflect imperfections
- Learn to listen to the word and examine your own heart.

Psalm 119:9-11

- Allow the scriptures to help you! They will keep you from sinning
Tip: memorize scriptures; keep them in your pocket

2 Chronicles 16:9

- God also sees if our hearts are fully committed to him
- Even though we sin, God loves us and wants to help us. God will give you the strength and will help you!

Conclusion: Do you need to be aware of the sin in your heart? How can you work on those things in your heart? What things do you need to work on in your heart?

HW: Find scriptures on those things you need to work on and read them and pray about them every day.

Training Yourself to Be Godly (Discipline)

Goal: Understanding that being a disciple takes work, effort, and discipline

- What is involved in training? What does it look like? What does it take? (time, discipline, sacrifice, effort, energy, perseverance, etc)
- Just like physical training, we need to train ourselves to be disciples.
- Your spiritual growth, development, and improvement depends on you taking personal responsibility to mature and grow. It is up to you.

Phil 2:12-13

- Whose responsibility is your salvation? (work out your own salvation)
- Why does Paul say “with fear and trembling”? (we need to take it seriously & understand seriousness of our salvation)

1 Tim 4:7-8

- Who is supposed to train you? (“yourself”)
- To train yourself to be Godly, what will it take? How can you do that?
- Which is more important physical training or spiritual training? (spiritual will benefit us in this life and will get us eternal life)

Heb 6:11-12

- What is diligence? (determination, perseverance, attention, care, effort) What would that look like when applied to your relationship with God?
- How long do we have to show diligence? (to the very end)
- Find someone you can imitate and learn from who is vs. 12. A spiritual mentor

Heb 12:11-12

- It’s ok if we don’t always like it but know it will produce good
Ex: Is working out always fun/painless experience? Why do people do it? (it takes pain to grow)
- Discipline will produce righteousness and train us

1 Cor 9:24-27

- After your relationship with God & spiritual training with all your heart.
- Being a disciple will involve spiritual training (“will go into strict training”)
- Remember you are training for something!! You are training yourself to be Godly so that you can finish the race and make it to heaven.

Conclusion: What are you feeling & thinking about this topic? Understand that it will be a step by step process. Olympic runners have been training for a life time. We too grow over time. How can you train yourself to be Godly? What things are you needing to work on and going to do?

HW: Write a <1pg summary on Godly training. Why it is important and how you can do it.

Purity

Goal: See God's standard for purity, and introduce the topic of sexual purity so that the teen understands what it is and begin to open up any necessary dialogue

- How would you define something pure?
Def: spotless, stainless, unmixed, free from pollution
- Illustration: Bottled Water (it is free of any dirt or pollutants)
- We are that pure bottled water to God when we are born, but we sin and put waste into the bottle.
- **James 1:27** we have to keep ourselves from being polluted)

1 Thes 4:3-8

- God makes it clear that he expects us to be "sanctified, holy, pure". Like that bottled water. We have to purify ourselves of pollution
- How does the scripture say we do that? (avoid immorality, self control, etc)
- What are the consequences of impurity? (we will be punished)
- Is there anything in this scripture that you don't understand?

2 Tim 2:22

- We need to flee from impurity!! Is that hard to do some times?
Ex: friends are watching a movie you know has bad scenes. What do you do? What should you do if you were fleeing from impurity?
- Pursue things from God in place of impurity
- What could some of the evil desires of youth be? What impure things do you see in your life or those in school? (jokes, dress, what people watch, flirting, masturbation, touching, sexual relationships, etc)

Eph 5:3-5

- How much is a hint? So can we come close to being impure
- How could we hint at impurity? (flirting, thinking about sexual things, our clothes, etc)
- Do you see anyways in your life that you hint at impurity or any ways you are/have been impure?
- Impurity is "improper for God's holy people"
- What are the consequences if we live impure lives? (not inherit the kingdom of God)

Conclusion: James 5:16 says we need to confess our sins to someone who can help you. Is there anything in these scriptures that you see in your life and need to work on? We have to see that God takes purity very seriously and the even flirting/hinting with the world/sin is out of place for God's people.

HW: Write a 1pg essay about these scriptures, what you learned about purity, and how God feels about our impurity. Also include the ways you need to work on your life, and how you can begin removing it.

Grace

Goal: To show how much God loves them, and that grace is given to us freely even though we do not earn it. Hopefully a deeper understanding of God's love and mercy will draw the teen closer to God.

- How would you define Grace? Where do you think it comes from?
How do we get it?
Def: freely given mercy, pardon, or favor that has not been earned.
- God shows us this grace that is freely given to us, and that we have not earned. It is a gift
- Is it hard for you to feel God's grace and love for you? (some feel God's wrath more)

Ps 103:8-10

- How does it make you feel to hear that this is how God feels about you?
- Is there any sin in your life that you feel like God can't forgive?
- We clearly see God's grace here: compassionate, abounding in love, slow to anger, doesn't accuse, doesn't treat us as we deserve (no matter what if we turn to him)
- Are you afraid to turn to God with anything?

Rom 8:1-2

- What does "no condemnation" mean? ((similar to grace)
- How do we receive grace and where does it come from? (Jesus)
- We can never earn grace (**Gal 2:21**).
- Grace comes through Jesus' sacrifice for our sins (**+2 Cor 5:21**)

1 Cor 15:9-11

- How did God's grace impact Paul's life?
Illustration: You are walking and we're about to be hit by a bus that you did not see coming. Someone pushes you out of the way, but they get hit instead and die. How would you want to live your life after that happened? Would you want to live a full life or waste your life in their honor?
- Jesus died so that we could live. God's grace & Jesus' sacrifice should change our lives, making us want to live for & serve God

Isaiah 30: 18-19

- Who has to call out for God's grace? Who could come between you and grace? (only you)
- God wants to show us Grace but we have to call out to him for help, and he will come

Conclusion: God's grace is almost too good to be true! What did you learn about God's grace toward you? How can you respond to that knowledge? Is there anything that you feel like holds you back from asking for God's grace and help?
HW: Rewrite your notes on this study with a conclusion on what you learned about God's grace and how it effects & impacts you and your thoughts on it.

Respect

Goal: To help the teen see that respect is biblical, and God expects us to show the proper respect to him and those he puts in our lives.

- What does respect look like?
- Are most teen agers respectful or disrespectful? How?

Luke 18:9-14

- How do you think God feels when we approach God like the Pharisee?
- We need to come to God with awe and respect, understanding our place

Eph 6:1-3

- Do you think your parents are honored when you are disrespectful?
- What are ways you are disrespectful to people? (tone, attitude, talking back, fits, not obeying the first time, arrogant, etc)
- God is honored when we respect and honor our parents

1 Peter 2:17

- To whom should we show respect? (EVERYONE!)
- Who do you have a hard time showing respect to?
- As you build your relationship with God, you will develop that Godly fear because you know how powerful God is, this will help you live a life to honor him & obey his commands

1 Thes 5:12-13

- Who are those who are over you? (any authority: parents, teachers, leaders, older people, law)
- Why should you respect and honor them? (they work hard, teach/admonish you, care for you)
- Would people describe you as someone who keeps the peace?

Rom 13:1-7

- Who put the leaders/authorities in your life? (God did)
- How does God feel when you disrespect those in your life? (Like you are disrespecting him)
- Would you be described as rebellious? Do you want to work on that? How can you?
- Who do you owe respect & honor? Do you show it to them?

Conclusion: Is respect important to God? Who do you need to work on showing respect to? How can you do that?

HW: Choose 1-3 people that you will focus on showing respect to this week. If you are disrespectful apologize to them. Pray that God will help you be loving, honoring, and respectful to them.

Persecution

Goal: To help your teen see that persecution will come and learn how God expects us to view & deal with it

- What is persecution?
- Have you ever faced persecution from others about anything before? How did it make you feel?

John 15:18-21

- Jesus was persecuted. Jesus says we WILL be persecuted. (**2 Tim 3:12**)
- Have you faced any persecution yet? If not, do you share about God?
- The kingdom of God and this world are in conflict = persecution.
- How do you feel about not belonging to this world?

Matt 5:10-12

- People may say things about us that are not true.
- Why are we blessed? Read: **Mark 10:29-31** God will take care and look out for you!
- Has anything like these scriptures happened in your life? How does it make you feel?

Look up scriptures that apply to what teen is facing:

- * **Friends/others at school:** 1 Peter 4:1-5 surprised your don't join them in sin
- * **Religious people:** Matt 12:22-28, 21:42-26, 23:1-36
- * **Family:** Matt 10:34-39

Matt 5:43-48

- How do people at school react when other people oppose them?
- Not only are we supposed to not react, but we are supposed to love and pray for them
- How do you feel about loving and praying for your enemies?

2 Cor 4:16-18

- In hard times we have to remember the eternal perspective (heaven) and remember we are living to serve and glorify God. Hard times will not last forever.

Conclusion: What did you learn about persecution? Understand that persecution will come if we are living an outwardly focused, open life. Are you afraid of persecution? Does it hold you back? If you are not facing persecution, are you living the life God envisions for you? If you are facing persecution, how have you learned to deal with it?

HW: Come up with goal together in study for the week to work on: dealing with persecution, pushing past fear of persecution, or forgiving and loving those persecuting you

Introduction to Sin: God's View of Sin

Goal: Understand how sin came into the world; how God feels when we sin

- Do you think about how your sin affects God? Do you think about God when you sin?
- How do you think God feels when we sin?

Gen 1:26-28 = God loved us so much he wanted us to be like him

Gen 2:15-17 = God gave them 1 simple rule to follow

Gen 3:1-7= What happened here? Did Adam & Eve brake God's law?

Gen 3:8-13= How do you think God is feeling here? What are Adam and Eve doing? (making excuses) Whose fault do you think it is that they broke God's law?

- Why did they hide? Do you ever hide when you have done wrong?

Gen 3:21-24= God still took care of Adam & Eve even though they disobeyed. But what were Adam & Eve's consequences to their sin? (Separation from God)

- Our sin too has consequences
- God wanted to have a close connection & relationship with us. To live and have fellowship with us. Our sin messes that up.
- God can not have anything to do with sin. God is completely holy. When we choose to sin, God must separate himself from us.
- How do you think God felt that he could not have the relationship with Adam and Eve together in the garden any more?

Gen 6:5-8

- When God sees our sin, how does it make him feel? (regret, deeply troubled, grief)
- When someone dies we feel grief. That is how God feels when we sin
- But we can be like Moses! Find favor in God's eyes, a light in the dark

Ish 30:9-17

- Do you understand what is happening here? (if not explain)
- Our sin will have consequences if we do not listen to the truth & God
- What image of God does this verse paint? How do you feel?
- 1 side of God: he is a judge, he is just, true
- If we do not turn to God, we will face the consequences

Ish 30:18-22

- What image of God does this section of verse pain? Any feelings?
- God longs to rescue you and help you. How do we get his help? (We must call out to God to help us)
- God is both a Wrathful & Merciful. Which side do you want to be on?

Conclusion: How did this study help you think about how your sins affect God? How does it make you feel to think about that? Although God is all powerful, he feels deeply when we sin.

HW: Write a letter to God about this study. About what you learned about him, sin, and how your sin affects him. Encourage them to address things they may be afraid to talk about and maybe feel like they need to apologize, confess, and ask for God's forgiveness for.

Courage

Goal: See that God wants us to have courage & that it is a Godly quality

- Do you think it takes courage to be a disciple? Why/not?
- Would you say you are courageous? Why?
- When do you not feel courageous?

Deut 20:1-4

- God says "DO NOT BE..." this is a command
- When we are afraid, what does that say about our faith?
- Do you ever feel fainthearted, afraid, terrified, or panic?
- What do you normally do? What should you do?
- What does this scripture show you about why we don't have to feel that way? What do you learn about God? What can you do?
- God will go out ahead of you! He will fight for you!!

2 Tim 1:6-8

- When we are afraid, what happens to the gifts God gives us?
- Fear = smothers the fire & spirit of God
- What kind of Spirit does God give us?
- Are you afraid of testifying about Jesus?

Luke 12:4-7

- What should we be afraid of? (Satan)
- What do we see about God here? Will he take care of you?
- Do you need to be afraid if you are with God?

Acts 4:13

- What did the people see in Peter and John?
- If you stood up for what was right in your school confidently, what do you think people would think?
- People notice when we have courage, it stands out. We can show other people God through our righteous courage. God shines through when we follow him and his ways.

Conclusion: Do you think you need to grow in your courage? How did you learn you can work on that through our study.

HW: Come up with practical goals of how they can work on being courageous this week. Pray every day that God helps you be courageous. Next week you can share with us your victories!

Honesty & Integrity

Goal: See that God wants us to have courage

- What is integrity? What does it look like?
- Integrity: soundness of moral character; honesty; firm adherence to a code; not corrupt
- Someone who is: honest, respectable, can be trusted, true to their word, responsible, not caught in scandals, credible, etc
- Do you think many teenagers have integrity and are honest? Why do teens lie? Do you have a hard time being honest?

Matt 22:15-17

- How did Jesus' enemies describe him? (honest, true, integrity)
- What do we learn about Jesus in this scripture that we can imitate?
- How do you think other people would describe you?
- Do you feel like you speak the truth? Are you swayed by others?
- Do you think Jesus exaggerated or blew things out of proportion?

Ps 139:1-4

- How does this make you feel to know this is how God is?
- How would God describe what he find in your thoughts, heart and speech? Would he say it is honest, true, full of integrity like Jesus?
- Does this make you want to be more careful of how you are? Do you care or think about what God sees?

Ps 139:23-24

- Do you have the attitude like David, welcoming God's examination?
- This is true humility. Ok with finding fault so that it can be reconciled

John 8:44

- When we are dishonest, to whom do we belong? (Satan)
- Satan's language is lying, he is the father of lies
- When you lie, you are working with Satan. He wins
- What do you think? What do you learn from this scripture?

1 Peter 3:8-12

- What is deceit?
- Deceit: shading the truth, white lies, not telling the whole story, allowing people to believe something, sugar coat, exaggeration
- We must be completely honest. Deceit is lying and we are supposed to keep it from our lips.
- What should our lives look like? What can you imitate in this verse?

Conclusion: What have you learned about what the bible teaches about honesty? What have you learned about yourself and where you need to grow? Do you feel like you are honest? Do you want to be? Is there anything you would like to be open about or get some help with?

HW: Write a 1 page summary of what the bible teaches about honesty and the conclusions you have come to for yourself.

Who are you living to please?

Goal: to see the importance of pleasing God and seeking praise and approval from Him; to understand where their current motivation is coming from.

- Whose approval is important to you? Who do you want to please or get approval from? Why?

John 5:41-44

- Who did Jesus look for approval from?
- What does it say about our love for God when we do things for other people's approval rather than God? What is Jesus saying about that?
- If we do not do what is right because we care more about what they think than we love people more than we love God
- Do you feel that you seek after God's approval? Is God's approval important to you?

Gal 1:10

- What kind of attitude did Paul have?
- Who was he living to serve?
- Why is people pleasing detrimental to being a follower of Christ?

Mark 12:14

- What does it mean to be "swayed by men?"
- How do you think Jesus wasn't swayed by men?
- Who are you most likely to be swayed by? How can you imitate Jesus?

2 Cor 5:9-10

- What should our goal be? (to please him/God)
- Why should we care about trying to please God? (Judgment)

Conclusion: Do you think you struggle with being a people pleaser? Is your reputation/popularity something you are willing to sacrifice if necessary to be a Christian? How do you need to work on living to please God?

HW: Write a summary and conclusion about how you need to live to please God and not men. Be specific about areas of your life that you need to change.

Evangelism

Goal: Understand that reaching out to others is an essential part of being a disciple

- What does it mean to share your faith? Why do we do it?
- How do you feel about reaching out to others and sharing with them about your relationship with God?

Matt 28:16-20

- These are Jesus' last words to his disciples
- What mission did he give them?
- What mission will you have as a disciple?

2 Cor 5:16-21

- How do you view school? How do you think that perspective changes/should change when you are a disciple
- We no longer view things in a "worldly point of view"
- We are a part of a ministry of "reconciliation" = restore the relationship between men & God.
- What do you think it means to be Christ's ambassadors?
- What appeal do you think God is making through us?

Acts 8:1-4

- What was the attitude of the early Christians about sharing the gospel?
- When and where did they share about God? (everywhere!)

Acts 4:29-31

- How should you speak to others about God? (Boldly!)
- How can you find boldness? (Pray)
- Do you feel afraid to share with others about God? What holds you back? (share how you first felt about evangelism, discuss ways to overcome, and some practical tips for them)

1 Peter 3:13-16

- What do you think it means to "share your faith"?
- It is more than an invitation to church. Share about your love for God, about your conversion, about your life and why you follow Jesus
- Be gentle and respectful in how you share with people

Conclusion: Why do we share our faith? Why does this need to be a part of your life? In what ways do you need to grow in this area? Ultimately, we need to follow Jesus' example. He came to seek and save the lost. This is our mission also as disciples.

HW: Conquer an intimidating situation this week. Set a goal together.

Feelings

Goal: Understand that our feelings can not determine our relationship with God

- How do your feelings influence your life?
- Do you think they influence your relationship with God?

Prov 3:5-7

- Whose opinion do you trust the most? (their own)
- Who do you feel is right most of the time? (themselves)

Prov 14:12

- How do you decide to do what is right? Do you just do what you think is right?
- How can we make sure we do what IS right vs what SEEMS right?
- Leaning not on your own understanding means trusting in the word

Jer 17:9

- Is trusting your heart fool proof?
- Which is easier trusting in ourselves or trusting in God? Which do you want to do? (trusting in God takes work, but it is successful!)
- Our feelings can deceive us. God teaches that relying on what we feel is not enough.

1 Sam 13:11-14

- Where did Saul go wrong? What did he do wrong? Why?
- Saul sinned against God because he followed his feelings vs commands
- Do you have a hard time deciding to do things or not to do things based on your feelings?

Luke 9:23

- What does deny yourself mean?
- Part of denying yourself means denying your feelings. Not always doing what you want or feel like doing, but obeying God.

Matt 7:21-23

- Crying out "Lord Lord" shows an emotional devotion to God, but did these people actually do what the word says?
- What happens if we "feel" like Christians and claim to be Christians but we do not do what the word says?
- Do you always want to do the right thing? Is that an excuse to God?

Conclusion: Is living controlled by our feelings a good thing? What is the danger of living based on what we feel? (**Gal 5:16-17**) Is it hard for you to not do what you feel? How do you need to grow in this area? How can you do that?

HW: This week pay attention to WHY you are doing the things you do. Keep a journal about what you notice every day about how you make decisions and if they are based on God or on your own feelings and desires.

Seeking Truth

Goal: Learning to not just what we want to hear; see that the bible warns about false teachings; we need to seek out the truth in God's word.

- Why do you think God gave us the bible?
- Do you tend to listen to people to decide what you believe or find out for yourself?
- Make an agreement to just look at the word, not to judge or speak on opinion but to all come together to listen to the scriptures about Truth

2 Tim 4:3-4

- What is this scripture warning us about?
- Why do people listen to what they want to hear?
- What does this scripture say about some religious teachers? Are there teachers out there who instruct us wrong?
- How can we know what is right? (READ! God gives us the answers)

2 Cor 11:3-4

- Are we supposed to put up with wrong teaching?
- Some people will preach a gospel and a Jesus different to the one of the Bible. We are not supposed to put up with it and easily accept it

Act 17:11

- Why were the Berean's commended? How can you imitate that?
- Questioning & looking for your self, and deciphering the truth is commendable! We should not take anyone's word but God's at face value

Jer 23:16-32

- This is a warning by God not to listen to religious leaders who do not follow the scriptures but prophecy the delusions of their own minds
- Why do you think God is so serious about this topic?

Matt 7:21-23

- Is just being "religious" enough?
- What do we have to do to get to heaven?

Conclusion: What do you need to do to make sure that you know the truth? Have you been relying on men or God's word for your beliefs? We need to rely on the scriptures and not men to get us to heaven.

HW: Sit down and write out your convictions & beliefs. See if they are in the bible and what the bible says. We will go over them and answer and questions next time.

Righteousness, No Matter What

Goal: Learning

- What is "righteousness"?
- Righteous: acting in accord with divine or moral law; free from guilt or sin; doing what is right & just
- When is it most challenging to be righteous?

1 John 3:7

- Who is righteous? (the one who does what is right)
- In what things should we try to be righteous?

James 2:21-24

- What made Abraham righteous?
- How can we be righteous?
- Is it enough to just read & say you love God?
- To be righteous is to do what is right and to obey God's word

Matt 26:38-39

- Set up the scene, explain what is going on
- When is it hard to do what is right?
- How did Jesus feel about obeying God? What did he do?
- We have to do what is right even when we don't feel like it

Acts 5:27-29

- Is it hard to do what is right when other people bully you?
- Have you ever not done something right because of other people?
- The disciples did what was right in the face of persecution & peer pressure. This is true righteousness. We must do what God says always

Ps 34:15-20

- Who does God look after?
- Do you want to be righteous or unrighteous before God?

Conclusion: How do you think you do with doing what is right? When is it hardest for you? Why is being righteous so important if you are going to be a Christian?

HW: Write a 1 page summary and conclusion on what righteousness is. Be specific about areas of your life that you need to change.

Character Study: Joseph

Genesis 39

Character Trait: Integrity (making right choices!)

Definition of Character Trait: Complete honesty

Synonyms of Character Trait: Above reproach

Antonym (opposite) of Character Trait: Deceit, compromise, wavering in conviction

1. What was Joseph's reaction to Potiphar's wife
Vs. 8-9, 12: he refused and ran from temptation
2. What was everyone's and God's view of Joseph?
God: blessed him and was proud; People: the Warden's view – made him in charge of everyone at the prison
3. What was the main conflict that Joseph had to face?
Giving into temptation when no one knew
4. How did he overcome his situation?
He stated his conviction and ran (literally)

Modern-day/ personal example situation that relates to the character:

Being given responsibilities around the house; being tempted to conform at school (compromise)

Application:

1. How can you apply honesty and being trustworthy in your life?
2. What do you do when you're faced with temptation?

Additional Study: Luke 6:46-49; Psalm 46:1-2

Memory Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:13

Homework:

Write a scripture on your hand and look at it during temptation and have a scripture ready

Character Study: Joshua

Numbers 13:1 – 14:12

Character Trait: Faithful

Definition of Character Trait: Faith: Joshua obeyed God and trusted that God would deliver them from danger, courage

Synonyms of Character Trait: Belief, obedience, trust

Antonym (opposite) of Character Trait: Fear, cowardice

1. Before the people entered the land what did God ask Moses to do?
Survey the land
2. What report did the spies bring back?
10 brought back a bad report, 2 brought back a good report
3. What was the main reason why they felt they couldn't take the land?
Fear, giants
4. Why was Joshua still able to trust God in the midst of so much faithlessness?
Made a decision to believe

Modern-day/ personal example situation that relates to the character:

Surrounded by people who aren't seeking to be righteous at school.

Application:

1. What are the things you are afraid of?
2. How can you imitate Joshua's faith in action?

Additional Study/memory verse: James 2:17; Hebrews 11:6

Homework: Come up with your own Joshua story a scary or challenging situation you are currently facing and ask for prayers to face it with faith.

Character Study: David

1 Samuel 17

Character Trait: Courage

Definition of character trait: not afraid, doing what you fear, being determined, not caring about what others think or say

Synonyms of character trait: brave, fearless, internally strong

Antonym (opposite of character trait: afraid, wimpy, fearful, cowardly)

1. What made David courageous/what inspired him?
Goliath's disrespect for God and no one standing up to him... he felt like he had to defend God's honor.
2. What is the conflict in the story?
Goliath is threatening the Israelite army and God.
3. What was David's role in the family?
He was youngest, smallest and most put down in the family. (His job was just to tend the sheep)
4. Why were people fearful of Goliath?
He was 9 feet tall and a known champion, He was openly defying Israel. (He was intimidating)

Modern Day/personal example situation that relates to character.

Standing up for what's right even when other's aren't and people want you to go with the norm. ex. Cursing

Application:

1. What are your current Goliath's? How can you stand up to them?
2. How are you not courageous? How can you be more like David?

Additional Study: Psalm 23; 2 Tim 1:7; Deut 31:6 (memory verse)

Homework:

Pick one of your Goliath's in your life and triumph over it like David.

Character Study: Gideon

Judges 7:8-21

Character Trait: Overcoming Weakness

Definition of character trait: conquer fear, not let fear affect actions

Synonyms of character trait: bold, focused, faithful

Antonym (opposite of character trait: fearful, cowardly, timid, shy)

1. How do we know Gideon is afraid?
He decided to hear what the enemy had to say first, as God told him to do if he was afraid.
2. How do we know Gideon overcame his fear and trusted God?
He did what God said
3. What would have been Gideon's chances of winning without God on his side? (explore the difference of the size of the two armies)
4. How did Gideon defeat the Midianites? (faith, trust, and obeying God)

Modern Day/personal example situation that relates to character.

Overcoming fear to share our faith in school and claim God's promise that there are open people.

Application:

1. What do you find holds you back from sharing your faith?
2. How can you be more courageous?

Additional Study: Hebrews 3:13-14, Hebrews 11:1-2, 32-34, Matthew 28:18-20, Proverbs 3:5 (memory verse)

Homework:

Confess your weakness, and make plans to overcome this fear (take a friend along with you!)

Character Study: Deborah

Judges 4:4-10

Character Trait: Faith with conviction

Definition of character trait: fully trusting in the Lord, evident through actions

Synonyms of character trait: trust, bold, steadfast

Antonym (opposite of character trait: fearful, timid, weak-willed)

1. What were Deborah's actions, and what do they show about her character? (leading Israelites, sharing God's message, going to war)
2. Why was Barak reluctant to go to war? (wasn't trusting God to come through/trusting the people God sent)
3. What could have happened if Deborah didn't stand up to Barak? (he would have let his fear rule him, the Israelites would still be enslaved to Jabin, King of Canaan)
5. Why was it for important for Deborah, as a leader, to remain faithful? (her response affects others, she represents God)

Modern Day/personal example situation that relates to character.

Our war: persecution at school, standing strong and encouraging the faith of those who are weaker

Application:

1. How can you share your faith and build up the faith of others?
2. What are the areas of your life you are faithless in and how can you grow in them?

Additional Study: Matthew 7:24-27, 2 Timothy 1:7 (memory verse)

Homework:

Make a specific goal of how to change an area of your life you are faithless about.

Character Study: Ruth

Ruth 1:16-17, 2:11-12

Character Trait: Devotion

Definition of character trait: following with all your heart, no matter what, and no matter where it takes you

Synonyms of character trait: faithfulness, obedience, sacrifice, commitment

Antonym (opposite of character trait: unfaithful, adulterous, divided, disobedient)

1. How does Ruth demonstrate devotion in this passage? (devoted to God and his people, devoted to providing for Naomi, "I will do whatever you say")
2. What could Ruth have put her security in/been devoted to? (no guarantees to remarry, didn't know where she was going and if she'd be accepted, dangers of journey)
3. How did she handle her loss/her circumstances? (she didn't blame God, she continued to trust Him and put her life in his hands)

Modern Day/personal example situation that relates to character.

Devoted to God despite difficult circumstances (i.e. break-ups, close relationships that fell away, divorce of parents, moving to another city)

Application:

1. What are you devoted to and how does it look? (school, sports, fashion, popularity)
2. What would it look like for you to be devoted to God?

Additional Study: 1 Samuel 20 (David and Jonathan)

Homework:

Demonstrate devotion to God by having regular or more special quiet times (idea – read through book of Ruth)

Character Study: Samuel

1 Samuel 3

Character Trait: Obedient serving

Definition of character trait: obedience – doing what you are told the first time.
Serving – willing and eager to do what’s expected

Synonyms of character trait: helpful, respectful, trustworthy

Antonym (opposite of character trait: proud, disobedient, selfish, disrespectful)

1. Read verse 10 and explain the significance when Samuel says, “speak, for your servant is listening” (showing his obedience to God)
2. What is an example in your life that would reflect what Samuel says to God? (going to God and parents and asking “what can I do?” Also obeying the first time when asked to do something).
3. What is a possible obstacle that Samuel could face?
4. What excuse could Samuel have used for not obeying God? (Eli didn’t realize it was God, kept telling him to lie down, following people)

Modern Day/personal example situation that relates to character.

God speaks to us through his word and his people, and our response to what we read and what we’re told reveals if we have this kind of heart or not.

Application:

1. What specifically is God and/or others asking you to do?
2. How can you imitate Samuel’s heart of obedient service?

Additional Study: Matthew 20:26, 1 Peter 2:13, Ephesians 6:1 (memory verse)

Homework:

Identify an area where you have resisted to obey and change this to obedience. Ask the question of what God and other people are trying to tell you.

Character Study: Abraham

Hebrews 11:8-12, 17-19

Character Trait: Obedient faith

Definition of character trait: trusting that what God has in mind is best, and being willing to submit

Synonyms of character trait: trust, love

Antonym (opposite of character trait: disobedience, fear, pride (thinking you know best))

1. Why is Abraham commended for his faith? (he trusted in God’s plan, willing to sacrifice son and move to a new land)
2. Why was Abraham willing to sacrifice his only son? (He loved God and was willing to trust Him, he believed God had a bigger plan and would provide).
3. What do you think Abraham was thinking or feeling when he sacrificed his only son? (doubtful, scared, eventually knowing God would do what’s best).
4. How did Abraham go from being doubtful to totally believing God? (God had already done miraculous things in allowing them to have a son, he reasoned that God could raise someone from the dead).

Modern Day/personal example situation that relates to character.

Giving up something special God has given you, to show that he’s first in your life.

Application:

1. How far does your faith allow you to go? What’s the most difficult thing for you to give up?
2. What right now are you having a hard time giving over to God?

Additional Study: Genesis 12:1-9, 22:1-19, Hebrews 11:1 (memory verse)

Homework:

List things you doubt and get advice on how you can believe God and give them over to him.

Character Study: Daniel

Daniel 1

Character Trait: Resolved to please God

Definition of character trait: loyal, integrity, persistent in your beliefs

Synonyms of character trait: faithful, resolved

Antonym (opposite) of character trait: defiant, cowardly, faithless,

1. Why did Daniel ask to not eat the royal food? (to not defile his body, not to be unclean. (Exodus 3:15;Daniel 1:8)
2. What was the outcome of Daniel's decision to not eat the kings food? (The official showed favor and compassion, they looked healthier (1:15)
3. What did the guard say that might have kept Daniel from eating the food? (that he was scared that the King would have him killed (1:10)
4. How did Daniel overcome the King's decrees on food? (He surrounded himself with likeminded people; trusted God)

Modern-day/personal example situation that relates to character

-Peer pressure to do what is wrong in God's eyes; participate in what defiles you

Application:

1. What are some situations that you will face where you will need to stand up for God?
2. What ways can you sacrifice something in your life to show appreciation to God.

Additional Study: Exodus 34:15, Daniel 3:16, Daniel 3:18

Homework: Fast from something that is important to you that will help you focus on pleasing God.

Character Study: Nehemiah

Nehemiah 1

Character Trait: Selfless, responsible, caring, humble

Definition of character trait: accountability of events

Synonyms of character trait: accountability

Antonym (opposite) of character trait: irresponsible, lazy, selfish

1. Why was Nehemiah motivated to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem? (saw that Gods people were susceptible to attack)
2. How did Nehemiah express his care and concern? (prays on behalf of Israel; seeks out the King with a plan to rebuild)
3. What is Nehemiah praying for? (praying for the sins of Israel to be forgiven)
4. How did Nehemiah go about gaining permission to begin rebuilding the wall? (prayed, fasted, and approached the King with a shrewd plan to rebuild the wall)

Modern-day/personal example situation that relates to character

-pray for the forgiveness of others in your life

-desire to act and intervene in the lives of others who are in need

Application:

1. How could you imitate Nehemiah's motivation towards others?
2. What obstacles would you face in imitating Nehemiah's character at home? At school?

Additional Study: Ephesians 4:3, Colosians 3:23-24, Hebrews 3:12

Homework:

Write down the specific needs of 3 people who are close to you. Pray and plan about what you will do to meet those needs. Prepare to discuss how you met those needs next study.