

**who is God?**



# foundations

*knowing God through his word*

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*for no one can lay a foundation  
other than that which is laid,  
**which is Jesus Christ.***

**1 corinthians 3:11**



loving him  
& loving his.

**foundations: knowing God through his word, 2nd edition.**

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# can we know God?

**God has given his unfailing word to make himself known to his children.** yet, far too often, we depend on other voices to tell us about God instead of knowing him for ourselves through his word.

God is continually pursuing our hearts; our affections for and knowledge of God grow as we spend time with him. **this needs to be our daily pursuit.**

every child of God is able to intimately know God through the scriptures—**we are all called to know him and make him known.** as we grow in our knowledge of him, we also get to invite others to grow in their knowledge of him through discipleship.

*foundations* was created to encourage an active learning process for discipling relationships. it in no way replaces scripture as the authority on any topic or truth; rather, it is intended to point you to scripture in your growing understanding of God and his word. the purpose of this tool is to assist in laying a solid biblical foundation, equip believers to study the bible, and disciple others to do the same.

## a few notes as you begin:

- **engage**

each chapter of foundations includes an introduction and four sections. this format provides a structure for meeting together regularly to study and discuss the word. **consider focusing on just one section of a chapter each week.** this pace will allow you to enjoy several days engaging with the word and reflecting on what the Holy Spirit reveals to you before you meet to talk about it.

however, you are welcome to move through it at whatever pace works for your discipling relationship. everything is provided for your benefit—feel free to use it in the way that works best for you as the Spirit leads.

**teach me your way,  
o Lord, that i may walk  
in your truth; unite my  
heart to fear your name.**

**psalm 86:11**

- **pray**

it is the Holy Spirit who guides us into all truth (john 16:13); anytime we seek to read or study scripture, **we need to first pray** that the Holy Spirit will illuminate our minds to understand the truths we read and soften our hearts to let scripture transform us.

- **worship**

resist the temptation to treat any of this as an item on a checklist or see this as homework. the end goal of this resource is not that you would finish any of it in a specific timeframe, but that you would grow to know and enjoy God more. **as we gain a greater vision of God through his word, our worship of him will deepen.**

# why discipleship?

the story of God is the story of a king saving his people and building his eternal kingdom—a kingdom that is made up of people from every tribe, tongue, and nation. his is an ever-expanding kingdom, and it includes us as **disciples of Jesus**.

before Jesus returned to heaven after his resurrection, he commanded his disciples to go and make disciples who would then make disciples (matthew 28:19-20). you are reading these words as a result of their obedience and the obedience of generations of men and women after them.

Jesus' command to make disciples applies just as much to us today as it did to his original followers. **he desires disciples, not merely converts**. he wants us to be active followers and worshippers of him, not simply spectators and fans.

as you use this resource, do not let this be merely a cognitive exercise. discipleship is not simply knowing more about God, but rather it is **knowing God intimately and daily surrendering your life to his lordship**.

this is the essence of discipleship: **follow me as together we follow Christ**.

read slowly, and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you more of who God is and his steadfast love for you specifically. pray that your heart and mind would be moved to worship as you meet with God in his word.

**in order to love God we must know him**. as our knowledge of him grows, we get to make him known. as members of the body of Christ, we get to spur one another on towards Christ-likeness through discipleship.

this is the essence of discipleship: follow me as together we follow Christ. the commandment hasn't changed—we are to be discipled to make disciples who make disciples. his kingdom is made up of people who know him, love him, and follow him. **if you belong to him, you are a part of that kingdom**.

» *Jesus is building his kingdom through our active participation in discipleship. as you start this journey, begin praying now about who God might be leading you to disciple as you grow in him.*

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*so then you are no longer strangers and aliens,  
but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members  
of the household of God, **built on the foundation  
of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself  
being the cornerstone.***

**ephesians 2:19-20**

# who is God?

often when we hear the name *God*, we think exclusively of God the father—and yet our God is triune. **he has eternally existed as one Godhead in three persons:** God the father, God the son, and God the Holy Spirit. this three-in-one doctrine of God is known as *the trinity*. all three are of one essence and are co-equal and co-eternal. **each person of the trinity is fully God.**

although there is one shared divine will within the Godhead, **they each carry out different roles in redemption.** God the father is eternally a father to God the son. as father, he initiates redemption by sending his son to accomplish the eternal plan of salvation. the Spirit is then sent from both the father and the son to apply the work of salvation to our lives and unite us to Christ for all eternity.

so when we speak of the attributes and character of God, **what is true of God the father is also always true of God the son and God the Holy Spirit.**

» *why is it necessary to believe that God is both one and three?*

we live in a post-christian nation where many claim to be “spiritual” and would assent to the existence of a higher power yet do not know the one true God. there are many different ideas about God and theories about the nature of who God is. this is why **we so desperately need to know the triune God of the bible**, because the god of our culture and of our liking is not the true God of creation.

at the beginning of time, God made humankind in his own image; however, far too often we tend to make him in our own image by viewing him according to our human nature and desires. **the God of the bible is not like us; he is transcendent—**beyond the limits of all possible knowledge and experience. although he is not necessarily always who we think we want him to be, he is absolutely always everything we need him to be.

» *what are some culturally popular views of God?*

» *how would you define or describe God? what informs your view of him?*

» *what questions do you have about God?*

**“a God who is all love, all grace, all mercy, no sovereignty, no justice, no holiness, and no wrath is an idol.”**

**r.c. sproul**

the attributes of God are vast and essential to our understanding of who God is. some of these attributes apply to God alone (incommunicable). some can also be true of us—although never perfectly—because we are made in his image (communicable).



# holy

» *before we dive into this attribute, consider what comes to mind when you hear the word holy. in your own words, how would you define holiness?*

God is holy in and of himself—he is **entirely set apart and has no equal**. he is absolutely perfect and separated from all sin. his divine purity is untainted by evil and he is faultless in all his ways. it is in and because of his holiness that he intentionally does all things.

it is his holiness that stirs our awe and reverence—the holiness of God is both beautiful and terrifying:

- **exodus 3:1-6**
- **deuteronomy 5:24**
- **1 samuel 2:2**
- **hebrews 12:28-29**

**God is jealous for the integrity of his holiness and glory.** God's jealousy is not like ours—his jealousy comes from his holiness, whereas our jealousy comes from our selfish desires, fears, and insecurities. God is jealous for us to worship him alone because there is no one holier or more worthy of worship.

- **exodus 20:1-7**
- **exodus 34:14**
- **isaiah 42:8**
- **ezekiel 36:20-23**

in our sin, we cannot stand in the presence of God's holiness. because he is holy, our sin separates us from God forever if we are not in Christ, but **because of Jesus, we too can be called holy.**

- **genesis 3:22-24**
- **colossians 1:21-22**
- **hebrews 12:14**
- **1 peter 1:13-16**

ultimately, we will worship him in his holiness for all eternity.

- **exodus 15:11**
- **psalm 96:6-9**
- **isaiah 6:1-7**
- **revelation 4:8-11**

as you reflect on what you've read, consider these questions:

- » *how have these verses shaped how you view God's holiness?*
- » *do you truly believe that, in Christ, God sees you as holy? why or why not?*
- » *in learning about God's holiness, what most draws you to worship him?*

"if God is holy, then he can't sin. if God can't sin, then he can't sin against me. if he can't sin against me, shouldn't that make him the most trustworthy being there is?" —**jackie hill perry**





# love

culturally, the word *love* means many different things to many different people. people define love according to their preferences and perspectives. however, love did not originate with humankind, so our attempt to define love will never encapsulate the full understanding of **the one who is himself love: God is love** (1 john 4:8).

» *what do you believe about God's love, or what have you been taught about it?*

## he is love eternal

**every attribute of God is true of him fully and eternally**; love is no exception. from eternity past, before time began, God has always lived in loving communion as one Godhead in the persons of the trinity: God the father, God the son, and God the Holy Spirit. he has eternally been satisfied in himself not needing anything or lacking in any way.

**God is love eternal so everything he does is done in love.** it is out of that love that God created and sustains the universe and everything in it—including you and me. we live to love and glorify him.

- deuteronomy 10:14-15
- psalm 102:25-27
- psalm 103:17-19
- john 17:22-26
- acts 17:24-28
- ephesians 1:3-6

## he loved us first

there is nothing we could have ever done to earn God's love for us. God loves us because he chose to love us. as a child of God, you are fully loved by him regardless of anything you have done; love is his motivation in choosing you.

- deuteronomy 7:6-8
- job 7:17
- john 3:16
- romans 5:6-11
- ephesians 2:4-5
- 1 john 4:7-19

» *why is it important to believe that God loved us first?*

» *do you ever struggle to believe that you are truly loved by God? why or why not?*

## his love endures forever

the phrase *steadfast love* is used approximately 200 times throughout the bible to describe God's unending love for his people. God's love for us is based upon his own faithfulness to his covenant promises, and we can trust his faithfulness. just as there is nothing we can do to *earn* God's love, there is also nothing we have to do to *keep* God's love.

- deuteronomy 7:9
- psalm 136:1-26
- jeremiah 31:3
- romans 8:38-39

**God is love from eternity past and his love will endure through all of eternity future.** because he loves us first—before us and in spite of us—we can be set free from any false belief that we have to live perfectly for God to love us or keep loving us. we get to live holy lives because we *are* loved—not in order to *be* loved.



# omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent

occasionally, there are theological terms used to describe God and his work that do not actually show up in the text of scripture. however, the concepts they describe are clearly spelled out in God's word. *omniscient*, *omnipotent*, and *omnipresent* are three such terms.

these are the words that we use to affirm that **God is all-knowing, all-powerful, and is fully present everywhere at all times**. he is not bound by time or space or any other limits. he alone is above and outside of these things that constrain us in our human existence, and these are attributes that must be true of him in order for him to truly be transcendent.

## omniscience

God is all-knowing. there is nothing about anything that God does not already know. this means nothing in all of history or in the future will catch God by surprise. this also means that there is nothing about you—no thought or detail of your life—that is not fully known by God.

- 1 kings 8:37-39
- 1 chronicles 28:9
- psalm 56:8
- isaiah 46:9-10
- luke 12:7
- 1 john 3:19-20

- » *what does God specifically know according to these scriptures?*
- » *is it comforting or disconcerting to think about God knowing absolutely everything? why?*

## omnipotence

God is all-powerful. there is nothing he cannot do. no one and no thing in heaven or earth or under the earth is equal to or more powerful than our God. it is important to note that just because he *can* do anything, doesn't necessarily mean he will. rather, he is able to do everything in accordance with his divine will. he has the power to accomplish his purposes and fulfill his promises.

- job 26:7-14
- jeremiah 10:12-13
- matthew 8:23-27
- romans 1:20
- 1 corinthians 6:14
- ephesians 3:14-21

- » *what do these verses reveal about God's power?*
- » *how have you seen his power at work?*
- » *what are some practical ways you can rely on God's power in your everyday life?*

## omnipresence

God is everywhere. since God is spirit, he is not confined to time or space or a body as we are. he is with us, wherever we are, while at the same time with a believer on the other side of the globe. because this is true, we can be sure that he is always present—always with us in every moment of every day, allowing us to abide in him continuously.

- deuteronomy 31:6-8
- 1 kings 8:22-27
- jeremiah 23:23-24
- ezekiel 37:14
- matthew 28:18-20
- ephesians 4:4-6



# sovereign

God alone is sovereign over everything. if God is not sovereign, he is not God.

- 1 chronicles 29:10-13
- job 42:1-5
- isaiah 45:1-13
- lamentations 3:37-38
- proverbs 21:1
- daniel 2:20-22
- daniel 4:34-35
- romans 11:33-36

perhaps one of the most frustrating things about our existence is the finitude of our minds and our human limitations. we can never see the whole picture, nor can we control much in this life. this lack of control can leave us feeling both helpless and hopeless at times.

thankfully, God is not like us: **he is infinite and limitless**. he not only knows everything, he is also in control of everything. absolutely every event in all of history, including every detail of your life, has been under the sovereignty of God.

**because he alone supremely rules all things, he alone can be trusted with our whole lives.**

the unfortunate reality of living in this sinful, broken world is that we will all experience times of hardship and pain. it is difficult for our human minds to reconcile suffering and tragedy with God's sovereignty and goodness.

therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful creator while doing good.

1 peter 4:19

how are we to live in this tension? we may never be able to make sense of it in this life, but in humble dependence we ask him to increase our faith. **in faith, we can trust ourselves to our heavenly father's loving hands and perfect sovereignty**. we can take comfort in knowing that he sees the whole picture, is always in control, and is unchanging in his character. "*he who calls you is faithful*" (1 thessalonians 5:24).

- » *it's common to wrestle with the sovereignty of God. what specific things in your life have caused you to question his goodness or love in light of his sovereignty?*

## psalm 139

this psalm provides a powerful description of God's sovereignty. as david faces very real enemies (verses 19-22), he focuses on the character of God which increases his awe of the Lord and gives him a proper perspective of everything: himself, his enemies, his world, and most importantly, his God.

read and meditate on this chapter. read it repeatedly, don't rush, and engage with the Lord as he reveals himself to you through his word.

- » *what do these verses teach you about God's sovereignty and grandeur?*
- » *do you take comfort in God's sovereignty? why or why not? with complete honesty, tell God where you are currently struggling to trust him.*

as we end this chapter, take time to **consider all that you have learned about God and worship him for who he is.**

