

Building Your
FAITH

BY FRANK HAMRICK, JR. AND BEN WRIGHT

ProTeens

Building Your Faith

Copyright © 1991, 1998, 2004 by Positive Action For Christ, Inc., P.O. Box 1948, 833 Falls Road, Rocky Mount, NC 27802-1948. All rights reserved. No part may be reproduced in any manner without permission in writing from the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN:1-59557-011-X

Layout and design by Shannon Brown

Published by



Preface

Have you ever wondered if there is one sin at the root of all others? Some people believe pride or selfishness are the root sins, and we certainly do fall into these temptations easily. But there is another sin that is ultimately even the cause of pride and selfishness. This sin is a lack of faith. When we decide that we are more important than other people or when we determine to get our own way, we are revealing that we do not believe what God says about how great He is and how weak we are.

This ProTeen study is designed to help us build ourselves up in the faith, which involves knowing the truth and applying it to our lives. It includes reminding ourselves that God has the right to control our lives, and we can trust Him to take care of us. It will do this in the following four major areas:

- In the first section we will study about God—*The Foundation Of Faith*. You will discover what God is like and find new ways to know Him better. We will evaluate common views of God. Do you view Him as Santa Claus, a highway patrolman, a jack-in-the-box or a caring father?
- The second section introduces us to the men and women of Hebrews 11—*Testimonies Of Faith*. There is much to learn from the strengths and weaknesses in the lives of this group of people who bear testimony to God's goodness and wisdom and the blessing that He pours out on those who trust Him.
- The third section leads us on a journey through the letter written by James. No book in the Bible teaches us more directly about what biblical Christianity really looks like—*Faith In Your World*.
- In the final section of just one lesson we will reflect on the lessons from what we have learned about faith this year by testing our own faith. First John was written to help Christians know for sure that they have eternal life, and it contains criteria to examine ourselves—*Tests Of Faith*.

This student workbook contains the entire Scripture memory course for the year. We have chosen passages of varying lengths dealing with the topic of this study. There are thirteen passages listed in the Scripture memory course. Your youth leader will give you specific instructions for the Scripture memory plan that your youth group will be following.

Elements of This Study

Study the Table of Contents carefully. It will serve as a road map to show you where you are headed. Take note of the following elements found in this study.

- Correlating The Teacher's Lesson And Student's Lesson. For each lesson in your teacher's manual you have the content for the teacher's lesson, a filled-in copy of the student's lesson, the overheads for that lesson, and finally the quiz for that lesson. The teacher's lesson is actually a guide through the student's lesson to help you present the material to your teens. Study through the teacher's lesson and write down any additional thoughts or insights on the material that you have.

Take note of the places in the teacher's lesson where special notes and instructions are provided for the teacher.

- Big Idea. Since the first six lessons are drawn from several texts of Scripture, we have included a "Big Idea" to help you maintain the primary focus of these lessons. If your students don't get this idea, you've missed the point of the lesson. You should revisit this point often in your teaching. In the later lessons, the big idea is the title of the lesson.

- **Ask & Discuss.** This symbol highlights a question that you should ask the class. We firmly believe that students learn best when they are encouraged to think and these questions give you that opportunity.
- **Digging Deeper.** Many of the lessons have a student exercise section—indicated by the symbol on the left—designed to let your students explore on their own in their student manual. Normally, you will discuss their answers after the exercise.
- **Answers.** Every word that is to be filled in by the students in their books is underlined in your teacher’s manual.
- **Overheads.** These are provided as a visual aid for the presentation of these lessons. You may copy the overhead masters contained in this manual. Nothing else may be copied without getting permission from Positive Action For Christ. The transparency numbers correspond to the chapters where they are used. For example, overheads BYF 1A and BYF 1B are the first and second overheads used in lesson one.
- **Quizzes.** Written quizzes are provided for all the lessons. Quiz answers are at the end of the teacher’s lesson. You can administer them however you see fit.
- **Scripture Memory**

This student workbook contains the entire Scripture memory course for the year. We have chosen passages of varying lengths dealing with the topic of this study, “Building Your Faith.” There are thirteen passages listed in the Scripture Memory Course. Typically the junior and senior high teens are assigned a different number of verses to memorize. You may only require the junior high teens to memorize the first nine passages listed. You may wish to have the senior high teens say the verses in increments of ten while the junior high teens may say them in groups of five. You will notice that there is not a “memory verse” for each lesson but rather a list of passages for the whole study. The Scripture Memory Course is designed to be memorized throughout the duration of the entire 30–week study. (For ideas on scoring the verse memory, refer to the Director’s Manual.)

Romans 8:28–32	Isaiah 40:22–31	John 1:1–5, 10–14
Isaiah 6:1–8	Hebrews 1:1–40	Hebrews 12:1–8
James 1:1–8	James 1:19–27	James 2:14–26
James 3:1–12	James 3:13–4:17	1 John 1:1–10
1 John 2:1–11		

Whether you need grounding in your faith or something to stretch you to greater dependence on God, *Building Your Faith* will meet you where you are and point you in the right direction.

Contents

Unit 1: Foundations Of Faith		
Lesson 1	Does God Exist?	6
Lesson 2	What Is God Like?	13
Lesson 3	How Many Gods Are There?	20
Lesson 4	How Can We Know God?	27
Lesson 5	What Do We Know About God?	34
Lesson 6	Our Views Of God	41
Unit 2: Testimonies Of Faith		
Lesson 7	What Is Faith?	49
Lesson 8	Living By Faith	56
Lesson 9	Abel: Faith In The Plan Of God	62
Lesson 10	Enoch: Faith In The Person Of God	67
Lesson 11	Noah: Faith In The Proclamation Of God	72
Lesson 12	Abraham: Faith In The Purposes Of God	78
Lesson 13	Sarah: Faith In The Promises Of God	84
Lesson 14	The Patriarchs: Faith In The Program Of God	89
Lesson 15	Moses: Faith In The Pleasures Of God	95
Lesson 16	Joshua: Faith In The Power Of God	101
Lesson 17	Rahab: Faith In The Protection Of God	107
Lesson 18	Other Heroes: Faith In The Providence Of God	113
Lesson 19	So Great A Cloud Of Witnesses	120
Unit 3: Faith In Your World		
Lesson 20	Biblical Faith Produces Spiritual Maturity	126
Lesson 21	Biblical Faith Provides A Proper Perspective On Circumstances	132
Lesson 22	Biblical Faith Endures Temptation	138
Lesson 23	Biblical Faith Changes The Way You Live	145
Lesson 24	Biblical Faith Rejects Favoritism	151
Lesson 25	Biblical Faith Provides Evidence For Its Existence	156
Lesson 26	Biblical Faith Controls The Tongue	161
Lesson 27	Biblical Faith Cultivates Humility	167
Lesson 28	Biblical Faith Focuses On The Future	175
Lesson 29	Biblical Faith Turns To God In Adversity	181
Unit 4: Evidences Of Faith		
Lesson 30	Testing Your Faith	187

LESSON 1

Does God Exist?

Teacher's Note: This lesson is designed to be taught as a discussion lesson. There are a number of facts that are covered in the lesson, but the goal of the lesson is not for your teens to accumulate facts but to interact with these facts as you discuss them. We have provided you with probing questions to get the discussion started. Of course, it is up to you to decide how much time needs to be spent on each point.

Big Idea: Our belief in God is grounded in fact.

As we try to build ourselves up in the most holy faith this year, the first and most foundational topic we could discuss is God Himself. In these lessons on God, we will discuss God's existence, what He is like, how we can know Him, and how our views of Him affect our lives.

Tom's Story

Before we begin to discuss God's existence, let me introduce you to Tom. Tom is single and 21. He works at a local fast-food restaurant. He didn't do very well in high school (in fact, he just barely got out), so he didn't have a chance to go to college or to land a nice-paying job. He lives in a one-room apartment and somehow he manages to pay his bills.

Last Friday night Tom didn't have to work, so he decided to go to the bar and spend some time with his friends. By the time he decided to leave, he knew he shouldn't have had those last few drinks; but he thought he was in control of himself enough to get home. He climbed into his car, maneuvered onto the highway, and tried his best to concentrate on what he was doing.

However, he wasn't as "in control" as he thought. He found himself swerving from one side of the road to the other. Fortunately for him, traffic was very light on this stretch of highway, and he wasn't

meeting very many cars. Suddenly, as he was thinking about what he would do on Saturday, two blinding headlights that seemed to be coming right at him, startled him. His first reaction was a bad one. He jerked the steering wheel to the right, trying to avoid the oncoming car.

The result? Good news and bad news. The good news was that he did avoid the car. The bad news was that he skidded off the road, and his car began to turn flips. After what seemed like an hour, Tom came to his senses and found that he was pinned inside his car. He could feel blood trickling down his face, and all of a sudden he got very scared. Was this going to be the end for him?

For the first time in a long time, Tom began to cry. It really didn't matter because there was no one nearby to hear Tom. He felt all alone. Soon he began to talk out loud in between sobs. "Well, this may be the end for me. No one can hear me at least no one except God, if He really exists...God, are You really out there? I know I haven't thought about You much lately, but I've always heard about people who thought they were dying taking time to make their peace with God. So I guess that's what I need to do. To be honest with You, I'm not really sure that You even exist. But if You do exist, I want You to prove it to me. If You're really there, and if You're really listening to me right now, I want You to get me out of this fix. If You'll get me out of this alive, I'll know You're for real. And in return, I promise You that I'll live the rest of my life for You."

Now I've got some questions for you.

- If you were working as an assistant in the hospital, and Tom was brought in alive and told you this story, what would you say to Tom?
- Would you try to prove to Tom that God really does exist? If so, how would you go about it?
- Would you tell Tom that the fact that he is still alive proves that God heard him and really does exist?
- Could you use Tom's story in helping other people realize the importance of acknowledging God's existence? If so, how?

It's not enough to believe in God just because your mom and dad do. Do you really know God exists? How do you know?

Views On God's Existence

This brings us to the major question of this lesson: Does God exist? Down through the centuries this question has been answered in many different ways. A simple yes or no has not always answered it. Let's take a quick survey of the seven major ways this question has been answered by philosophers, theologians and yes, even common people.

- Atheism—There is no God.
- Agnosticism—We cannot know if there is a God.
- Pantheism—God is everything; everything is God.
- Polytheism—There are many gods.
- Dualism—There are two equal gods; one is good and the other is evil.
- Deism—God created the universe and then left it to run by itself. God doesn't interfere in the world. It's as if God wound the clock (world) and then let it run by itself.
- Theism—One true God exists. He is a personal being who rules over His universe. (Technically, this is *monotheism*, but we will simplify the term throughout this lesson.)

Arguments For God's Existence

Over the years great thinkers have used a number of logical arguments to point us toward a belief in God's existence. It is important for us to be familiar with their best arguments.

Teacher's Note: Don't let some of these big words trip you up. Simply explain what each argument means, and then spend most of your time discussing the questions that accompany most of the arguments. Don't be threatened if your teens ask some tough questions. And if you're not sure of the answer, don't try to bluff your way through it. Tell the teens that you and they should give it some more thought and be prepared to discuss it further next week.

Cosmological Argument

This argument says that for every effect, there is a cause greater than the effect.

Bring some dominos to class and have some teens line them up. Knock the first one down and explain that for every effect (fallen dominos) there is a greater cause (you).

How would you use this point to argue for the existence of God? What is the "effect?" What kind of cause is demanded by the vastness of our great universe?

Teleological Argument

This is the argument from design. In some ways it is similar to the cosmological argument. It says that because of the great evidence of order and design in the universe, there must be an intelligent Being who planned it all.

If you have an old watch, take a hammer to it and break it into many pieces. Bring the pieces in a shoebox and start shaking it. Ask your teens how long you would have to shake the box before the pieces would form a working watch. Likewise, our universe could not have happened by accident.

What are some of the evidences of design in nature? What are some evidences of orderliness? Could this have happened by mere chance? Could it have happened in any other way apart from the plan of a personal God?

Anthropological Argument

The Greek word for man is *anthropos*. This is really the argument from man himself. This argument takes a look at man and what he is like and determines that because he is the way he is, there must have been a God who made him. It takes note of the following factors.

1. There seems to be a universal idea of God. Even in the most remote regions, people sense the need to worship or appease some Being who is greater than themselves.
2. Men have a moral consciousness. They have a sense of right and wrong. Apart from some Supreme Being who Himself is the source of ethical standards, how could we have a sense of right and wrong? Some say that your culture and environment develop your sense of right and wrong in you. Of course, these things shape our consciences, but the question remains, Where do our consciences originate?
3. Men are personal beings; they have intellect, emotion and will. How do men get these if there is no God with intellect, emotion and will?

Ontological Argument

This argument says that because man has an idea of an absolutely perfect being, such a being must exist. This is true because if a “perfect being” were only an idea and not reality, then of course it would no longer be a perfect being because existence is part of its perfection. This is one of the weaker arguments, but it has been employed by some of the great theologians in the Church’s history.

Theological Argument

This is the argument from Scripture. It says that because we have a reliable historical source (the Bible) that tells us that God exists, He must exist.

Do you believe that the Bible is, in fact, a reliable historical source? Why do you believe this? (One of the greatest proofs is the great number of fulfilled prophecies. The Bible’s accuracy in predicting the future points

to its divine origin.) What does the Bible teach about whether or not God exists? What if someone refuses to believe that the Bible is God's Word? Can the Bible be trusted? Why or why not?

Practical Argument

This argument is called the practical argument because it says that of all the views of God we have studied, theism is the one that best fits the facts.


What are some of the major problems with the other views of God's existence? Are there legitimate answers for those problems? Are there problems with the view of theism? If so, what are they? How would you answer those problems?

Are you convinced? Someone once said, "A God capable of proof is no God at all." I suppose that there's a sense in which that is true. Because God is metaphysical (beyond the realm of the physical), the fact of His existence does not depend on scientific "proofs." However, these arguments can be helpful in supplying logical reasons for faith in the existence of God.

Do you think that people have an excuse for not believing in God? Why or why not?

A. J. Hoover has written: "Natural theology...can never establish the existence of the biblical God. These proofs may make one a deist, but only revelation will make one a Christian. Reason operating without revelation always turns up with a deity different from Yahweh, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Although human reason is a gift from God, it alone is not sufficient. For us to know God as He really is, it was absolutely essential that He choose to reveal Himself to us. Thankfully, He has done this (1) indirectly through His creation, (2) directly through His Word and (3) personally through His Son.

 Let's conclude this lesson with the following observations.

- Beginning with Genesis 1:1, the Bible assumes God's existence rather than trying to offer classical proofs for His existence.
- God says that the man who says there is no God is a "fool" (Psalm 14:1).
- God has revealed Himself plainly to man, but man has suppressed and rejected that knowledge because of its spiritual and moral implications (Rom. 1:18–20). The problem is not that there is not enough evidence for the existence of God; the problem is that sinful man wants to reject the evidence he has because it points out his need for God.
- Since we know that there is a God, it is of supreme importance that we get to know this God and seek to worship and serve Him. This is part of our purpose for the next five lessons.

Quiz Answers

1. B
2. G
3. E
4. C
5. A
6. F
7. D
8. Assumes
9. E
10. F
11. A
12. B
13. C
14. D
15. Creature, Creator, ungodly, unrighteous

LESSON 1

Does God Exist?

As we try to build ourselves up in the most holy faith this year, the first and most foundational topic we could discuss is God Himself. In these lessons on God, we will discuss God's existence, what He is like, how we can know Him and how our views of Him affect our lives.

Views On God's Existence

This brings us to the major question of this lesson: Does God exist? Let's take a quick survey of the seven major ways this question has been answered by philosophers, theologians and common people.

- Atheism —There is no God.
- Agnosticism —We cannot know if there is a God.
- Pantheism —God is everything; everything is God.
- Polytheism —There are many gods.
- Dualism —There are two equal gods; one is good and the other is evil.
- Deism —God created the universe and then left it to run by itself. God doesn't interfere in the world.
- Theism —One true God exists. He is a personal being who rules over His universe.

8 | BUILDING YOUR FAITH

Arguments For God's Existence

Over the centuries, great thinkers have used a number of logical arguments to point us toward a belief in God's existence. It is important for us to be familiar with their best arguments.

Cosmological—Argument from cause

Every effect has a corresponding cause. An effect as big as the universe must have a cause much greater than itself. Sometimes this is called the "First Cause."

Teleological—Argument from design

Our world is not random. We can observe tremendous order and design in the universe.

Anthropological—Argument from man

- There seems to be a universal idea of God.
- Men have a moral consciousness.
- Men are personal beings; they have intellect, emotion and will.

Ontological—Argument from man's idea of a perfect being

This argument says that because man has an idea of an absolutely perfect being, such a being must exist.

Theological—Argument from Scripture

This says that because we have a reliable historical source (the Bible) that tells us that God exists, He must exist.

Practical—Argument from explanation that fits the facts

Of all the views of God we have studied, theism is the one that best explains the facts.

"Natural theology...can never establish the existence of the biblical God. These proofs may make one a deist, but only revelation will make one a Christian. Reason operating without revelation always turns up with a deity different from Yahweh, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

LESSON 1: DOES GOD EXIST? | 9

Lessons For Our Lives

- The Bible assumes God's existence.
- God says that the man who says there is no God is a fool (Ps. 14:1).
- God has revealed Himself plainly to man, but man has suppressed and rejected that knowledge (Rom. 1:18–20).
- Since there is a God, we should seek to know, worship and serve Him.

Digging Deeper

Romans 1:18–32 describes for us how God has revealed His existence to mankind and how mankind has responded to that revelation. Read this passage and then fill in the blanks to complete the following statements.

- **1:18**—Men who hold down or suppress the truth God has revealed about Himself are described as ungodly and unrighteous.
- **1:20**—The things that are clearly seen by men are God's invisible qualities such as His eternal power and divine nature.
- **1:21**—Although men knew these facts about God, they refused to glorify God or give thanks to Him.
- **1:22**—When men rejected God's revelation of Himself, they thought they were being wise when actually they were showing themselves to be foolish.
- **1:23**—Ungodly men exchanged God's glory for images made like various kinds of animals.
- **1:24**—Because men rejected God's revelation of Himself, God gave them up to impurity.

10 | BUILDING YOUR FAITH

- **1:25**—When men reject God, they get things turned upside down; and so they choose to worship the creature instead of the Creator.
- **1:26**—Next, God gave men up to immoral desires (including homosexuality).
- **1:28**—Since they did not acknowledge God, He gave them over to a reprobate mind.
- **1:32**—Sinful mankind is so far from God due to rejecting God's revelation of Himself that even though he knows that death is the penalty for his sin, he still continues to commit sins himself and to have pleasure in others who practice sin.

These points sum up the teaching of this passage:

- God has revealed Himself to us (mankind).
- We have rejected God.
- God allows us to live with the consequences of our sin.

LESSON 1: DOES GOD EXIST? | 11

LESSON 2

What Is God Like?

Big Idea: We can know God.

Once we have established that God does exist, the next logical question we ask ourselves is, What is God like?

Before we jump into answering this question from Scripture, let's talk about what we think God is like.

Let's divide this room in half. One side will be the "agree" side and the other the "disagree" side. I am going to read some statements about God to you. If you agree, move to the agree side of the room; if you disagree, move to the disagree side. Once everyone has moved, be prepared to tell me why you chose your particular side of the room. Try to give some solid reasons that might convince someone on the opposite side of the room to change his or her mind and come join you.

Are you ready? Here are the statements. (Note: Although we will deal with most of these concepts in the lesson, a brief explanation appears at the end of each statement.)

1. God has a body with eyes, ears and a nose. (False: God is spirit and thus without material substance.)
2. God has some kind of form, but it is unlike anything we know. (This is false if you mean by "form" some material substance or physical form.)
3. It is not right to say that God is a person because the word "person" only refers to human beings. (False: The word "person" refers to those with the traits of personality, and those are possessed by both God and man.)
4. The Holy Spirit is the only Person of the Godhead who is truly a spirit. (False: God by His nature is spirit, and this applies to all

three Persons of the Godhead—even to Jesus Christ, who assumed a material body at His Incarnation.)

5. Adam was made in the image of God, but we are not. (False: We are still in the image of God, but because of sin that image has been distorted but not destroyed. Obviously we were not born in the same condition Adam enjoyed before the Fall.)
6. Since man was made in God's image, we can actually learn something about God by looking at man. (True: As we will see in this lesson, man's personality, morality and spirituality can show us something about what God is like.)

In answering the question, "What is God like?" there are four points that need to be made: (1) God is spirit, (2) God is a person, (3) God is one and (4) God is three-in-one. In this lesson we will discuss the first two points, and in Lesson 3 we will cover points three and four.

God Is Spirit.

One day, as Christ was waiting for His disciples to return from town where they had gone to buy some food, He decided to sit down by a well and rest. He was very tired; and so when a Samaritan woman came to draw some water from the well, He politely asked her for a drink. This led to a discussion between them concerning the difference between the water in the well and the living water Jesus had to offer. In the course of their discussion, the woman mentioned the importance of worshiping God in the proper location. Part of Christ's reply to her was, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

Christ did not mean by this statement that God is a ghost. Actually what He said was "God is spirit," by which He meant that as to His nature and essence God is spirit. Merrill Tenney wrote concerning this verse, "Jesus was endeavoring to convey to the woman that God cannot be confined to one place nor conceived of as a material being." The woman was unsure about where God should be worshiped. Christ's reply was that since God is spirit, He must be worshiped "in spirit and in truth." Since He Himself is not in a body and confined to one place, the worship of God should not be confined to one place.

Do you think that worship is only what you do in church? Since God is spirit, you can worship Him anywhere. Do you worship Him at home? School? Work?

There are other verses that point to the fact that God is spirit and thus without material form or substance (Deut. 4:12; 1 Kings 8:27; Jer. 23:24; Acts 7:47–49; 1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16).

Since the Bible teaches that God is spirit and does not have a material form or substance, that leaves us with some problems.

Why is God described in human terms?

First, let's establish what the Bible really says. The Bible mentions the following things in connection with God.

- Face (Ex. 33:20)
- Arm (Is. 52:10)
- Eyes (2 Chron. 16:9)
- Mouth (Is. 58:14)
- Hand and ear (Is. 59:1)
- Nose (2 Sam. 22:9, 16)
- Feet (Ps. 18:9)

Theologians call these anthropomorphisms. (Anthropos means man, and morphe means form. Thus the word refers to forms like those of mankind.) That means that they are human expressions to help our finite minds understand an infinite Subject. In other words, God uses these terms to describe Himself because they are the terms with which we are familiar. But these verses do not mean that God is a man with literal eyes or hands or feet. Why? Because He is spirit. He is not made of matter and does not have a material form. (Of course, He can choose to make Himself visible to men in some form; but it does not mean that that form is His essence.)

How can we be “in His image”?

Since God does not have a human, material form, being made in the image of God obviously does not mean that we are made to look like God. However, it does mean that we are made like God in several specific ways.

Animals are not made in God's image; therefore, we must be different than them. How are we different than animals?

- We have personality. The attributes of personality are knowledge, feelings and a will. Just like God, we are persons and have all three of these traits. (We will refer to these again later in this lesson.)
- We have morality. Being made in God's image also means that we have a sense of morality. This means that we have a sense of right and wrong, that we are free to make choices in our lives and that we are morally responsible for the choices we make.
- We have spirituality. This simply means that we have an awareness of God; and, after trusting Christ as Savior, we have the ability to commune with God. The very potential of our human spirits communing with God who is spirit indicates that we were made in God's likeness.

How does knowing that God is spirit change how you will worship Him?

God Is A Person.

What does the word “person” mean? The only persons we see everyday are human beings, but the term is not limited to humans. Why? Because it can be applied to anyone who has the three attributes of personality we mentioned earlier: (1) knowledge (a mind or intellect), (2) feelings (emotions), and (3) a will (the self-determining part of you that makes choices).

So how do we know that God is a person? The following things prove it:

God has attributes of personality.

How do we know that God has the three attributes of personality? Note what the Bible says.

- God has knowledge (Is. 1:18; 55:9).
- God has feelings (Ps. 5:5; John 3:16).
- God has a will (Eph. 1:11).

God is personally involved in our lives.

Unlike what some people think, God is not an impersonal force. He is a personal being who is interested and involved even in the details of our lives. We don't have time to read all the verses, but notice what the Bible says about all the things that God does—things that prove He is a person.

Have your class look up the references below and determine the activities that God does that prove He is a person. You may want to divide up the verses among your students.

- He speaks (Matt. 3:17).
- He sees (Matt. 6:6).
- He gives (John 14:16).
- He creates (Gen. 1:1).
- He upholds all things (Heb. 1:3).
- He cares for animals (Matt. 6:26).
- He provides (Matt. 6:30).
- He works (John 5:17).
- He blesses (Eph. 1:3).
- He keeps (John 17:11).
- He sends (John 20:21).
- He promises (Luke 24:49).
- He comforts (2 Cor. 1:3–4).
- He delivers (2 Tim. 3:11).

- He chooses (Eph. 1:4).
- He calls (1 Cor. 1:9).
- He disciplines (Heb. 12:6–10).
- He forgives (Matt. 6:14).

How does knowing that God is a person change how you relate to Him?

Lessons For Our Lives

What practical lessons for our everyday lives can we learn from the fact that by His very nature God is spirit and God is a person?

We must worship God with our spirit and in truth.

This brings us back to the key verse that tells us that God is spirit—John 4:24. This verse tells us that one practical lesson we can learn from this fact is that since God is spirit, we must worship Him in spirit and in truth. What do you think that means?

Worshiping God “in spirit” means that the most important thing about our worship is not the form, ritual or setting. The most important thing is the spirit or attitude of our hearts.

Some people think that just because they attend a “worship service” on Sunday morning, this means that they have worshiped God. However, the location of your body does not guarantee that you have worshiped. You can come to church, stand and sit at the right times, sing and pray—but still not worship God. God is spirit, and He must be worshiped in spirit. What is your attitude as you come to church? Do you have a desire to worship the Lord? Do you ever think about worshiping the Lord when you are away from church?

John 4:24 also says that God must be worshiped “in truth.” This means that we need to worship God in light of the truths He has revealed about Himself in His Word. We do not worship the God of our own ideas but the God of the Bible.

We must relate to God in person.

Since God is a person, He is a God who wants to relate to His creatures; He wants to have a personal relationship with us. The Bible itself is a story of God and His relationships.

- Why did He clothe Adam and Eve after they had sinned? Because He is a God of relationships.
- Why did He choose the nation of Israel for Himself? Because He is a God of relationships.

- Why was He willing to send His Son into this world to pay the price for sin? Because He is a God of relationships.
- Why is Christ going to return to take all of God's children to be with Him in heaven? Because He is a God of relationships.

Do you realize all that God has done to communicate His love for you? He wants us to walk with Him every day, listening to what He says to us in His Word and talking with Him in prayer. As we commune with Him each day, we grow in our relationship with Him.

Quiz Answers

1. These are human expressions to help our finite minds understand God.
2.
 - A. Personality
 - B. Morality
 - C. Spirituality
3.
 - A. Knowledge
 - B. Feelings
 - C. Will
4.
 - A. Worship, truth
 - B. Relate, person
5. Any six of these seven will do.
 - A. He speaks
 - B. He sees
 - C. He gives
 - D. He creates
 - E. He upholds
 - F. He cares
 - G. He provides
6. Deuteronomy 4:12; 1 Timothy 1:17; Acts 7:47–49

LESSON 2

What Is God Like?

In Lesson 1 we discussed the fact of God's existence. Once we have established that God does exist, the next logical question we ask ourselves is, "What is God like?"

God Is Spirit—Without Material Form Or Substance (John 4:24).

The Samaritan woman was unsure about where God should be worshipped. Christ's reply was that since God is spirit, He must be worshiped "in spirit and in truth." Since He Himself is not in a body and confined to one place, the worship of God should not be confined to one place.

Since the Bible teaches that God is spirit and does not have a form or material substance, that leaves us with some questions.

Why is God described in human terms?

These are human expressions to help our finite minds understand God.

In other words, God uses these terms to describe Himself because they are the terms with which we are familiar.

How can we be "in His image?"

- We have personality. The attributes of personality are knowledge, feelings and a will.
- We have morality. This means that we have a sense of right and wrong, that we are free to make choices in our lives and that we are morally responsible for the choices we make.
- We have spirituality. This simply means that we have an awareness of God.

God Is A Person.

God has attributes of personality.

- God has knowledge (Is. 1:18; 55:9).
- God has feelings (Ps. 5:5; John 3:16).
- God has a will (Eph. 1:11).

God is personally involved in our lives.

Unlike what some people think, God is not an impersonal force. He is a personal being who is interested and involved even in the details of our lives.

Look up the references below and fill in the blanks with the activities God does that prove He is a person.

- He speaks (Matt. 3:17).
- He sees (Matt. 6:6).
- He gives (John 14:16).
- He creates (Gen. 1:1).
- He upholds all things (Heb. 1:3).
- He cares for animals (Matt. 6:26).
- He provides (Matt. 6:30).

Lessons For Our Lives

We must worship God with our spirit and in truth.

Worshiping God "in spirit" means that the most important thing about our worship is the attitude of our hearts.

John 4:24 also says that God must be worshiped "in truth." This means that we need to worship God in light of the truths He has revealed about Himself in His Word. We do not worship the god of our own ideas but the God of the Bible.

We must relate to God in person.

Since God is a person, He is a God who wants to relate to His creatures. He wants to have a personal relationship with us.

Digging Deeper

The lesson emphasized the point that God is spirit. Let's look at this point again.

God is spirit. This means that God does not have a material form or substance. He does not have a body or any other material shape. He is not composed of matter.

There are ten passages listed below. Only six of them have anything to do with God being spirit and thus not confined to a body or a building (such as a temple) but rather filling heaven and earth. Read each passage and place a check (✓) in front of the six passages that show that God is spirit.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deuteronomy 4:12 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Kings 8:27 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Psalm 78:31 | <input type="checkbox"/> Isaiah 53:6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jeremiah 23:24 | <input type="checkbox"/> Luke 18:19 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acts 7:47-49 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Timothy 1:17 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Timothy 6:16 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 John 4:8 |

LESSON 3

How Many Gods Are There?

Big Idea: God's oneness demands our whole-hearted love.

In Lesson 1 we discussed the fact of God's existence. In Lesson 2 we began to discuss what God is like. We said that in answering the question, "What is God like?" there are four things that need to be said: (1) God is Spirit, (2) God is a Person, (3) God is one and (4) God is three-in-one. In Lesson 2 we covered the first two points; in this lesson we will look at points three and four.

Teacher's Note: This lesson contains many Scripture references. You may not have time to look at them all in class. However, if you feel that you are going to have time to do so, tell your teens at the beginning of the lesson to pay attention to the verses. At the end of the lesson they will play a short game to see what they can remember about some of these verses.

God Is One.

How many gods are there? Polytheism says there are many gods. Tritheism says there are three distinct gods. Dualism says there are two gods—one evil and one good. However, the Bible teaches that there is only one true God. Read the following clear statements of Scripture (Deut. 4:35; 6:4; Isa. 44:6; 45:5, 21; 1 Cor. 8:4; 1 Tim. 2:5; Jms. 2:19).

Thus the Bible is very clear about the fact that there is only one God. Do you really believe that there is only one God? (Get teens to respond.) As we have mentioned before, it does seem logical that there can only be one Supreme Being in the universe.

We may not realize how important this point is if we don't understand what is required of us when we believe that God is one. One of the passages we

looked at helps us apply this truth to our lives. When we read Deuteronomy 6:4–5 we see that we are supposed to love God with all our being.

Why are we commanded to love God completely right after we learn that He is the only God? Since God is one, He demands exclusive affection from us. Since He is one, we should have a single heart of love for Him. If there were many gods, it would be natural for us to have a divided heart; but since there is only one God, nothing else in our life should be loved more than Him.

God Is Three-In-One.

All right, so you say that you believe that there is only one true God. But what would you say if someone were to ask you these questions: “Do you believe that God the Father is God? Do you believe that Jesus Christ is God? Do you believe that the Holy Spirit is God? Well then, you have just admitted that you believe in three gods, haven’t you?”

The response of Christians throughout the centuries to questions such as these has been in the statement of the doctrine of the Trinity. What does the word “Trinity” mean? It comes from the Latin word *trinitas*, which means “threeness.” Where do we find the word “Trinity” in the Bible? (Have teens try to look it up.) The answer is that it’s not there.

Then how can we say that the doctrine of the Trinity is a biblical doctrine when the word itself is not even found in the Bible?

Even though the word “Trinity” is not found in Scripture, the concept that it represents is found there. The concept is that although God is one in essence and being (as we have already seen), there are nevertheless three Persons within the Godhead. (Some theologians use words other than “person” to describe the Godhead because they think that to use the word “person” might imply that there are three distinct gods instead of one God. However, since we have already clearly shown that the Bible teaches that God is one, for our purposes we will use the word “person.”)

Some have objected to the use of the word “Trinity” to describe this doctrine because, as we have pointed out, the word itself means “threeness” but says nothing about the oneness in the Godhead. For this reason some have suggested the use of the word “Tri-unity” to point out that there is both threeness and oneness at the same time in the Godhead.

How can there be three Persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and yet only one God? That is the mystery of the Trinity. Some have tried to point to illustrations within nature of times when there are three elements yet one (such as ice, water and steam or the shell, egg yolk and egg white). However, at some point all of these illustrations seem to break down because the simple fact is that there is nothing else like the Trinity. The Trinity is unique. We may not understand all of its mystery, but we can know it is true from the teachings of Scripture.

Old Testament indications of the Trinity

The Hebrew word *echad*. The Hebrew word *echad* (ekh-awd) is the word translated “one” in Deuteronomy 6:4—“The Lord our God is one Lord.” Dr. James Boice has pointed out that in this very verse where we find one of the strongest statements of the unity of God, “the word for ‘one’ is *echad* which means not one in isolation but one in unity. In fact, the word is never used in the Hebrew Bible of a stark singular entity. It is the word used in speaking of one bunch of grapes, for example, or in saying that the people of Israel responded as one people” (*Foundations of the Christian Faith*, Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1986, page 111). Thus, even the use of the Hebrew word for “one” in reference to God still allows for the plurality of persons within the Godhead.

God Speaking To Himself. Another indication in the Old Testament of plurality within the Godhead is seen in references where God refers to Himself in the plural.

“And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness” (Genesis 1:26a).

“[And the Lord said,] Let Us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech” (Genesis 11:7).

“Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us? Then said I, Here am I; send me” (Isaiah 6:8).

New Testament indications of the Trinity

While the doctrine of the Trinity is hinted at in the Old Testament, it is crystallized in the New Testament.

All Three Persons Of The Trinity Are Called God. Note the following verses.

- The Father is God (Rom. 1:7).
- The Son is God (Heb. 1:8).
- The Spirit is God (Acts 5:3–4).

All three Persons of the Trinity cooperate together as equals. Although the different Persons in the Godhead are presented as fulfilling different roles (the Father planned redemption, the Son paid the price for our redemption and the Spirit applies the effects of redemption to our hearts), yet they are constantly portrayed as working together as equals. Note the following examples.

- Creation (Father—Gen. 1:1; Son—John 1:3; Spirit—Job 33:4)
- Incarnation (Luke 1:35: Father—the Highest; Son—the Son of God; Spirit—the Holy Ghost)

- Christ's baptism (Matt. 3:16–17: Father—the voice from heaven; Son—Jesus; Spirit—descending like a dove)
- Atonement (Heb. 9:14: Father—the living God; Son—the blood of Christ; Spirit—the eternal Spirit)
- Christ's resurrection (Father—Acts 2:32; Son—John 10:17–18; Spirit—Rom. 1:4)
- Salvation (1 Pet. 1:2: Father—elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father; Son—unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ; Spirit—through sanctification of the Spirit)
- Great Commission (Matt. 28:19: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost)
- Prayer (Eph. 2:18: Father—we have access unto Him; Son—we have access through Him; Spirit—we have access by Him)

Let's Review

As we mentioned at the beginning of the lesson, we are going to conclude this lesson by playing a brief game to see how much you remember about some of the many verses referred to in this lesson.

Teacher's Note: If you don't feel that you have time to play this game now, perhaps you would want to use it at another activity sometime soon. Begin by dividing your teens into two groups of equal size and ability. Then list the numbers 1–10 on an overhead transparency or chalkboard. Tell the teens that each number stands for a different verse that was used in this lesson on the Trinity. You will read the verse and then ask them to tell you where it is found in the Bible.

After you have divided the teens into two teams, have the first team choose one of the numbers from 1–10. Read the verse for that number and go through the following procedure. First, ask them whether the verse is in the Old Testament or New Testament; if they answer correctly, they receive 10 points. Next, ask them for the name of the book which contains that verse; if they answer correctly, they receive a total of 25 points. (The 25 points are not in addition to the 10 points.) Next, ask them for the chapter number; if they answer correctly, they receive a total of 50 points. Next, ask them for the verse number, if they answer correctly, they receive a total of 75 points. The point totals are not cumulative; therefore, the highest number of points they can receive for any verse is 75 points.

Then have the second team choose a number and give them their verse. Continue with this process until both teams have had five verses. (Add more verses and numbers if you have more time.) The team with more points at the end of the game wins.

Be sure you tell the teens that you do not expect them to know the exact references for all of these verses. However, you should encourage them to think about what the verse is saying and use this as a clue to make an educated guess at least as to which testament or book it belongs to. If you think they need more help, let them use their student's manuals or even their Bibles but give them a 15-second time limit for searching.

Here are your ten verses for the game.

1. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19).
2. "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. 6:4).
3. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1).
4. "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us? Then said I, Here am I; send me" (Isa. 6:8).
5. "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." (Accept either Acts 5:3 or 5:4.)
6. "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3).
7. "And God said, Let Us make man in our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:26).
8. "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Lk. 1:35).
9. "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).
10. "And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Accept either Matt. 3:16 or 3:17.)

Quiz Answers

1.
 - A. Essence, being, Persons
 - B. Unity, Himself
 - C. God, equals
2. Exclusive affection
3. Single heart of love
4.
 - A. Creation
 - B. Incarnation
 - C. Christ's baptism
 - D. Atonement
 - E. Christ's resurrection
 - F. Salvation
 - G. Great Commission
 - H. Prayer

LESSON 3

How Many Gods
Are There?

God Is One.

How many gods are there? The Bible teaches that there is only one true God (Deut. 4:35; 6:4; Isa. 44:6; 45:5, 21; 1 Cor. 8:4; 1 Tim. 2:5; Jas. 2:19).

We may not realize how important this point is if we don't understand what is required of us when we believe that God is one. One of the passages we looked at helps us apply this truth to our lives. When we read Deuteronomy 6:4–5, we see that we are supposed to love God with all our being.

- Since God is one, He demands exclusive affection from us.
- Since God is one, we should have a single heart of love for Him.

God Is Three-In-One.

Even though the word “Trinity” is not found in Scripture, the concept that it represents is found there. Although God is one in essence and being, there are three Persons within the Godhead.

How can there be three Persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and yet only one God? That is the mystery of the Trinity. Some have tried to point to illustrations within nature. However, at some point all of these illustrations seem to break down because the simple fact is that there is nothing else like the Trinity.

The Trinity is unique. We may not understand all of its mystery, but we can know it is true from the teachings of Scripture.

Old Testament indications of the Trinity

- The Hebrew word for “one” means one in unity (Deut. 6:4).
Examples of this would be a bunch of grapes or when a group of people respond as one.
- God speaks to Himself (Gen. 1:26a; 11:7; Isa. 6:8).
God refers to Himself in the plural.

New Testament indications of the Trinity

While the doctrine of the Trinity is hinted at in the Old Testament, it is crystallized in the New Testament.

All three persons of the Trinity are called God.

- The Father is God (Rom. 1:7).
- The Son is God (Heb. 1:8).
- The Spirit is God (Acts 5:3–4).

All three persons of the Trinity cooperate together as equals.

- Creation (Father—Gen. 1:1; Son—John 1:3; Spirit—Job 33:4)
- Incarnation (Luke 1:35)
- Christ's baptism (Matt. 3:16–17)
- Atonement (Heb. 9:14)

- Christ's resurrection (Father—Acts 2:32; Son—John 10:17–18; Spirit—Rom. 1:4)
- Salvation (1 Pet. 1:2)
- Great commission (Matt. 28:19)
- Prayer (Eph. 2:18)

Digging Deeper

Match the following statements with the correct Scripture reference.

1.	<u>I</u>	The Son is called God.	A. Deut. 6:4
2.	<u>J</u>	God raised Jesus from the dead.	B. Eph. 2:18
3.	<u>F</u>	Father, Son and Spirit seen at Christ's baptism	C. 1 Cor. 8:4
4.	<u>C</u>	New Testament verse saying there is only one God	D. John 10:17–18
5.	<u>H</u>	The Father is called God.	E. Acts 5:3–4
6.	<u>B</u>	In prayer we have access to God through Christ by the Spirit.	F. Matt. 3:16–17
7.	<u>A</u>	Old Testament verse saying there is only one God	G. Gen. 1:26
8.	<u>E</u>	The Spirit is called God.	H. Rom. 1:7
9.	<u>G</u>	God speaking to Himself	I. Heb. 1:8
10.	<u>D</u>	Christ says He has the power to raise Himself from the dead.	J. Acts 2:32