

The Simple Gospel Bible Study Series Weekly Session Plan

Curriculum Written and Facilitated by Pastor Lynice Pinkard

Session 1 [[Video Link](#)]

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Title: *State Your Full Name for the Record: Who is God?*

SUMMARY of SESSION CONCEPT

God's fundamental character is love, and God has, in creating us as children, conferred on us the highest possible dignity a created being can have. Our entire approach to life--to being and to doing as created beings--needs to come out of our sense of God's character and imitation of that character. God is beyond our conception and we have a tendency to project onto God and onto scripture our sense of what the 'highest authority' might be like. We need to open our minds to the radically new and revolutionary revelation that God is offering us in these passages. When we begin to internalize the majesty of God's love, we can get our esteem, security, and assurance from our faith in God's revealed character. Everything human in alienation from God will fail and fail us, but God remains constant, and our hope must be rooted in our connection to God.

PASTORAL CONTEXT

People have often been sold, at some time, the idea of God as the heavenly patriarch and/or tyrant. When in a discouraged place, we may slip into the old fundamentalist (and Roman Catholic) superstition that the "Father" is a mean entity that has to be appeased by Jesus in order to accept us. People will benefit from being reminded that the Father is as radically loving as the Son.

SCRIPTURES

Exodus 3:13-14 (burning bush--God unwilling to explain himself)

Exodus 34:6-8 (God gives his "long name")

Psalms 145:8-9 (alluding to Exodus 34:6-7) One of the clearest statements in Scripture that God deeply loves every single person.

The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.

The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.

1 Jn 4:7-8 (God is agape love)

Additional: Psalm 36:5-10; Luke 15:11-32 (Parable of the Lost Son: the father never leaves the son; like the older brother, we just can't get how generous and ready to forgive and restore God is); Isaiah 55:6-9; James 1:17-18.

Key Words for further study

Hebrew: Exodus 34:6-7 and Psalm 145:8-9: *rachum* (rahkoom, compassionate, H7349); *chanun* (khahnoon, gracious, merciful, H2587) *chesed* (khessedh, faithfulness in love, H2617) *emet* (emmet, integrity--God will not veer from God's values--truth; H2617).

Psalm 145:9: *tob* (tov, good, generous, H2896). Greek: *agape* (ahgahpeh, unconditional commitment to the well-being of the other); *eleos* (ehlayose mercy, kindness)

*These are transliterations--renderings of Hebrew and Greek words in English letters.

The H and G numbers are keyed to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance to the King James Bible. Follow these at blueletterbible.org (see below and the how-to videos).

[From "To Crush a Serpent" by James Baldwin – 1987](#)

Tools for Online Independent Bible Study:

<http://www.blueletterbible.org> (many powerful tools including dictionaries of biblical words and concordance of Hebrew and Greek words)

<http://www.openbible.info/labs/cross-references/> (start with a verse you are studying and it will bring up all the verses that are related to it or similar to it in the scriptures)

Illustrations or Diagrams

[Value Systems Chart](#)

[Line drawing of Tiered Fountain](#)

*Let people know about and give them links to [The End of the Unrepentant](#) and [The Bad Place](#) and [SENT \(Spoken English New Testament\)](#)

Scripture learning objectives

- **Exod. 3:13-14** (burning bush) - God cannot be confined to the box of our human capacity to understand him. "I will prove to be what I will prove to be." "Come and see what I can do as a deliverer."
- **Exod. 34:6-8** - God is abundantly loving and abundantly forgiving. That does not mean there are no consequences to our actions. God made us so that we are interconnected by design. Therefore, our actions have knock-on consequences. The very same interconnectedness that causes sins to cascade from generation to generation in families makes it possible for us to learn good things from one another and influence one another for good.
- **Ps. 145:8-9** - God loves every created being--obedient or disobedient, doing well or not doing well. God's love is founded on God's character, not on the perfection of the created being.
- **1 John 4:7-8** - God is agape love, and it is our calling to learn this way of being from God.
- **Isa. 55:6-9** - It means the opposite of what we generally project on God: it is not that God is a greater perfectionist and is more easily offended than we are, but that God is so much more ready to forgive and restore the repentant that we cannot understand it. This is not a gospel of permissiveness. We are called upon to forsake our self-destructive and other-destructive ways, because God's desire is for our highest good.

Overall session objectives

1. People will realize that there is no way to understand the depth of God by intellectualizing--as Moses did in Exod. 3, you have to put your trust in God and "come and see."
2. People will realize that the OT as well as the NT reveals God as unequivocally loving, a God of mercy and love and justice and not an intolerant tyrant.
3. People will be freed from any unconscious marcionism. Marcion was an early Christian (~144 CE), who believed Jesus was the savior sent by God, but he rejected the Hebrew Bible and the God of Israel. Marcionists believed that the wrathful Hebrew God was a separate and lower entity than the all-forgiving God of the New Testament. Passages like Exod. 34 help dispel this misunderstanding. God is not different from Jesus.
4. People will realize the human tendency to project our shadows and greatest fears onto God.
5. People's faith in God's complete goodness will be encouraged.