

LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE / FOR SUNDAY MARCH 18, 2018

Quick Review

1. Based on Nat's message on reasons for God's existence, what questions or concerns were raised for you?
2. How did Nat's message prepare you to defend your faith?

My Story

1. What was the last thing that you created with your own hands? Were you satisfied with how it turned out? Why or why not?
2. Name something you take by faith in your everyday life? What areas of your life do you need explanations and reasons to believe that something is viable or legit?

Digging Deeper

Through listening to Nat's message, you should have a better confidence in understanding God's existence. In the homework this week, we'd like to go one step further by helping you understand who God is by studying God's characteristics and attributes.

1. What challenges do we face in trying to describe God? Read Psalm 145:3

LEADER NOTES

God is indescribable and incomprehensible (Psalm 145:3)

"Because God is infinite and we are finite or limited, we can never fully understand God. In this sense God is said to be incomprehensible...It is not true to say that God is unable to be understood, but it is true to say that cannot be understood fully or exhaustively." Wayne Grudem in *Systematic Theology* (p. 149).

Grudem, Wayne, *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.

There is challenge in knowing that God is transcendent yet also immanent. Explain these terms.

"It is his [*God*] particular function to uphold a sense of transcendence of God's being, which remains fundamentally unlike ours, however close he comes to us in other ways. This task [*upholding God's transcendence*] is vitally important because it is a common temptation for us to want to bring God down to our level, and even to reproach him for failing to understand us if he remains above and beyond what we are." Gerald Bray in *God is Love* (p. 135).

Bray, Gerald. *God is Love: A Biblical and Systematic Theology*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2012.

2. The following passages discuss the unique attributes of God. Read the passages and note the attribute.

- Psalm 90:2; 102:24-27; Acts 17:24-25 _____
- Isaiah 42:10; Malachi 3:6 _____
- Gen. 21:33; Deut. 33:27 _____
- Psalm 139:7-12; Jer. 23:23-24 _____
- Deut. 6:4; Exodus 34:6-7 _____
- Isaiah 46:10 _____

LEADER NOTES

The following list of incommunicable and communicable attributes (related to questions 2 and 3 of the Life Group Homework) are taken from Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology*, chapters 11 and 12.

ATTRIBUTE	DEFINITION	PASSAGES
Independence (Self-existent) (Self-sufficient)	<i>God does not need us or the rest of creation for anything, yet we and the rest of creation can glorify him and bring him joy.</i>	Psalm 90:2, 93:2; 102:24-27; Heb. 13:8; I Tim. 6:15; Rev. 1:8; Acts 17:24- 25
Unchangeableness (Immutable)	<i>God is unchanging in his being, perfections, purposes, and promises, yet God does act and feel emotions, and he acts and feels differently in response to different situations</i>	Psalm 90:2; 102:25-27; Malachi 3:6; Isaiah 46:9-11 Heb. 13:8
Eternity (Infinite)	<i>God has no beginning, end, or succession of moments in his own being, and he sees all time equally vividly, yet God sees events in time and acts in time.</i>	Gen. 21:33; Deut. 33:27; Psalm 90:2; Isaiah 40:28; Job 36:26; Rev. 1:8
Omnipresence	<i>Just as God is unlimited or infinite with respect to time, so God is unlimited with respect to space. God does not have size or spatial dimensions and is present at every point of space with his whole being, yet God acts differently</i>	Psalm 139:7- 12; Jeremiah 23:23-24
Unity	<i>God is not divided into parts, yet we see different attributes of God emphasized at different times.</i>	Deut. 6:4; Exodus 34:6-7; I Cor. 8:6; 1 John 1:5; 1 John 4:8
*Omnipotence (sovereignty)	<i>God is the supreme being who answers to no one and who has the absolute right to do with His creation as he desires. (carm.org)</i>	Isaiah 46:10

Others might add: transcendence, uniqueness (Isaiah 43:10; 44:6-7), Spirit, etc.

- In addition to the unique attributes of God that are listed in question two, what are some other attributes of God? Create a list and note a reference from the Bible if possible.

LEADER NOTES

As a leader, you may want to get the conversation started by noting a few of the attributes listed below.

Quick List of Communicable Attributes – Shared attributes that are in some way imitated by us.

▪ Spirituality	Luke 24:39; John 4:24
▪ Invisibility	1 Tim. 1:17
▪ Knowledge (omniscience)	Rom. 16:27; Heb. 4:13; I John 3:20
▪ Wisdom	Psalm 104:24
▪ Truthfulness (faithfulness)	John 17:3; I John 5:20
▪ Goodness	Luke 18:19
▪ Love	I John 4:8
▪ Mercy (Grace or Patience)	Exodus 3:7, 17: 34:6; Psalm 103:8,13; Matt. 9:36
▪ Holiness	Lev. 19:2; 11:44-45; 20:26; Psalm 71:22; Isaiah 6:3; I Pet. 1:16
▪ Peace (Order)	I Cor. 14:33
▪ Righteousness (Justice)	Deut. 32:4; Psalm 19:7-9; Jer. 9:24
▪ Jealousy	Exodus 20:5
▪ Wrath	Exodus 32:9-10; Psalm 5:5, 11:5
▪ Will	Eph. 1:11
▪ Freedom	Psalm 115:3
▪ *Omnipotence/Sovereignty	Gen. 18:14; Psalm 33:9; Isa. 40:28, 46:10; Jer. 32:27
▪ Perfection	Psalm 18:30; Deut. 32:4
▪ Blessedness	I Tim. 6:15; I Tim. 1:11
▪ Beauty	Psalm 27:4
▪ Glory	Psalm 24:10; 104:1-2

Others might include: speech or veracity (Gen. 1:3), personal, life, persistence, grace, benevolent.

- Lastly, why is it important to know who God is? How does knowing God (the sum total of all his attributes) change my daily life in regard to decision making, devotion, and commitment?

Taking it Home

- Evaluate your confidence in God from weak to strong. What needs to happen or where do you need to go in order to strengthen your confidence?
- As you consider the attributes of God covered in this study, which attributes confuse you? Which attributes are the most comforting and meaningful? Explain why.
- Describe a time when you felt backed into a corner because of your beliefs, especially as it relates to your belief in God. Do you wish you would have responded differently? How can the group pray for the development of your faith and for difficult moments when your faith is challenged?