

Greater Morning Star Youth Leadership and Ministry Course

Theology—the study of God

Course Description

God is the focal point of our lives. It is through Him that we live, move and have our being. This course will present the students with a focus on the essence, characteristics and holiness of God as well as His plan for mankind.

Objectives

Understand who God is and appreciate the mystery of His robing himself in flesh, dwelling among men and offering the ultimate sacrifice for the salvation of man, bringing him back into the fellowship with God that Adam had in Eden.

Introduction

I. Who is God?

God is a spirit and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth; John 4:24

God has always existed as the eternal spirit of wisdom, righteousness and power.

Psalm 90:2

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even **from everlasting** to **everlasting**, thou art God

Psalm 93:2

Thy throne is established of old: thou art **from everlasting**.

Revelation 1:8

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord who is God, "He who is and was and is coming, the Almighty."

God is the creator and sustainer of life. Genesis tells us that in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. God created the vegetation and the animal life. The crowning glory of God's creation is man.

II. The Essence of God

To speak of the essence of God is to speak about who God really is. By essence we mean "being". The word essence is derived from the Latin verb "to be" and is in turn a translation of the Greek word *ousia*, which also means "being". More than having being or existence, God *is* being. He makes this clear to all when He proclaims His name Jehovah (or Jahweh) to Moses and explains its meaning

Exodus 3:14-15

Hebrews 1:1-3a

As described in His Word, the Bible, His being is best considered in terms of His **nature** (i.e. the composition of His essence) and His **character** (i.e. the traits of His essence). God is ***infinite*** in ***nature*** and ***perfect*** in ***character***

A. Infinity: God is infinite in His ***nature***, unlimited and unbounded in every positive way:

Hear, O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord is one.
Deuteronomy 6:4

When firmly grasped, God's infinity – infinity in every way and according to any conceivable true standard – is a clarifying concept, **illuminating His abilities**. God's infinite nature will always be more than the highest, the best and the purest that the human mind can comprehend.

1. God is **Spiritual**:⁽³⁾

God is spirit, and those who worship Him must do so in

[His] Spirit and in [His] truth.
John 4:24

God's being transcends the physical universe. He is not limited or bounded by material issues or concerns. God is not subject to matter in any way. God is not made of matter – God created matter and employs it however He desires (Gen.1:1; 14:19 & 22; Deut.10:14; Job 38:4-11; Ps.102:25; Is.45:18; Jn.1:3; Col.1:16-17; Heb.1:3).

2. God is **Eternal**:

Before the mountains were born, or you gave birth to the earth and world, from everlasting to everlasting, you are God.
Psalm 90:2

God's being transcends time. He is not limited or bounded by temporal issues or concerns. God is not subject to time in any way. God is not constrained by time – God created time and employs it however He desires (Ps.90:4; 93:2; 102:24-27; Mic.5:2; Jn.8:58; 17:5; Heb.13:8; Rev.4:8-11).

3. God is **Immeasurable**:

Shall God really dwell on earth? Behold, the heavens – even the entire universe – cannot contain You! How much less this temple I have built.
1st Kings 8:27

God's being transcends space. He is not limited or bounded by spatial issues or concerns. God is not subject to space in any way. God is not confined by space – God created space and employs it however He desires (2Chron.2:5-6; Job 11:7-9; 36:26; 37:23; Ps.86:10; Jer.23:24; Jn.6:21; Acts 17:24; Eph.1:23b).

4. God is **Unique**:

"With whom will you compare Me that I should be equal

[to him]?" says the Holy One.
Isaiah 40:25

Uniqueness comes from God's infinite nature. No one else in the universe can reasonably be compared to Him. He is absolutely unique within His own creation, and therefore the one Person to whom all honor is due. Uniqueness thus speaks to God's *natural authority* and *ability* to order the universe however He chooses. From the standpoint of His *transcendence* of the physical universe, He is unique by virtue of His spirituality, eternity and immeasurability. From the standpoint of His *supremacy within* the physical universe, He is unique by virtue of His omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence (Deut.4:39; 6:4; 32:39; Is.43:10-11; 45:5, 6, 14, 21, 22; Jas.2:19). Only God is able to create morally accountable creatures and a world in which they may exercise their free-will.

5. God is **Omnipotent**:

Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Does any miracle lie beyond my power?
Jeremiah 32:27

God is all-powerful, irrespective of matter. He can effect anything He desires in the material realm, and nothing can transpire apart from His will. Therefore there is no deed, nor was there ever, nor will there ever be which God is unable to do, small or great. As the Almighty One (Rev.1:8; 4:8), His ability to accomplish any event he desires within His creation now and forever is comprehensive and absolute (Gen.18:14; Job 5:9; 26:6-14; 38:4-38; 42:2; Ps.8:1-9; 62:11 [in Hebrew: see KJV]; Prov.21:30; Is.40:26; Jer.27:5; Lk.1:37; Jn.1:3; Rom.1:20; Eph.1:19; Col.1:17; Heb.1:3).

6. God is **Omniscient**:

I am God – there exists no other One;

[I am] God – and nothing like Me exists.
 Since the [very] beginning, I have been making known
 the end;
 Since [eternity] past, things that have not yet been done.
 Isaiah 46:9b-10

God is all-knowing, irrespective of time. He can effect anything He desires in the temporal realm. Therefore God knows, always has known and always will know everything, the end from the beginning. As the Everlasting One (Ps.90:2 &4), His knowledge of every event that ever has or will or even could occur within His creation is comprehensive and absolute (1Sam.2:3; Ps.139:1-4 & 12; 147:5; Is.42:9; Matt.10:29-30; 11:21; Jn.1:1-2; 1Cor.2:7-10; Heb.4:13; 1Jn.3:20).

7. God is **Omnipresent**:

Where shall I go from your Spirit?
 Or where shall I flee from before you?
 If I should ascend to heaven, you are there.
 If I should make my bed in Sheol, there you are.
 If I should wing my way to where the sun rises in the east,
 or take up residence beyond the furthest reaches
 of the western sea,
 Even there you would lead me by the hand, you would
 hold me fast with your [strong] right hand.
 Psalm 139:7-10

God is ever-present, irrespective of space. He can effect anything He desires in the spatial realm (Job 26:7). Therefore God has the ability, has always had and always will have, to be anywhere and everywhere, local and universal. As the Ever-Present One (Acts 17:27-28), His ability to be present at any or every point within His creation whenever He desires is comprehensive and absolute (Job 22:12; Is.66:1-2; Jer.23:23-24; Prov.15:3).

B. Perfection: God is perfect in His *character*, irreproachable and blameless in every possible way.

So be perfect, as your Father in Heaven is perfect.

Matthew 5:48

When firmly grasped, God's perfection – perfection in every way and according to any conceivable true standard – is a clarifying concept, *illuminating His motives*. God's perfect character will never be less than the highest, the best and the purest that the human mind can comprehend.

1. God is **Good** (Ex.18:9 KJV; 33:19; 2Chron.6:41; Ps.23:6; 25:8; 27:13; 31:19; 33:5 KJV; 119:68; 145:7a; Matt.19:17; Mark 10:18; Lk.18:19; Rom.2:4; 11:22; Tit.3:4-5 KJV):

The Lord is good to everyone, His kindness extends to everything He has made.

Psalm 145:9

God's character is good (Hebrew *tobh*: טוב); it is the *antithesis* of evil. So how does goodness respond to sinful man? In His goodness, God always has our best interests at heart. Therefore His desire for us to be free from evil and devoted to good is genuine. Even though we are sinful and by nature unworthy of His blessing, in His goodness God has nevertheless found a *gracious* way to redeem us from sin without compromising His character, namely, by giving us the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ.

2. God is **Holy** (Ex.3:5; Lev.11:44-45; 21:8; Ps.22:3; 30:4; 99:9; Is.6:3; 43:15; 55:5b-9; 57:15; Acts 3:14; Rev.4:8):

But just as He who has called you is holy, you too should be entirely holy in your behavior. For the scripture says:

Be holy, for I am holy.

1st Peter 1:15-16

God's character is holy (Hebrew *qadhosh*: קדוש); it is completely *separate* from evil. So how does holiness respond to sinful man? In His holiness, God can never compromise His perfect standards for any reason. Therefore His commitment to condemning evil and rewarding good is inviolable. But even though we are sinful and by nature deserving of His judgment, in His holiness God has nevertheless found a *merciful* way to justify us in spite of our sin without violating His character, namely, by judging His Son, Jesus Christ in our place.

3. God is **Faithful and True** (Deut.32:4; Josh.21:45; 2Sam.7:28; 1Kng.8:56; Ps.33:4; 36:5; 89:1; 89:33-34; 111:7-8; 119:89-90 & 160; 143:1; 146:6; Is.11:5b; Matt.24:35; Jn.1:14; 7:28; 14:6; 17:3; Rom.3:3-4; 1Cor.1:9; 10:13; 2Cor.1:18; 1Thes.5:23-24; 2Thes.3:3; 2Tim.2:13 & 15; Heb.6:18; 10:23; 11:11; 13:5-6; 1Pet.4:19; Rev.3:7 & 14; 15:3; 16:7):

O Lord, thou art my God.
I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name.
For thou hast done wonderful things.
Thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.
Isaiah 25:1 KJV

God's character is faithful and true (Hebrew: 'omen, 'emeth: אמת, אמון); it is *actively opposed* to evil. So how do truth and faithfulness respond to sinful man? In His faithfulness and truth, God is entirely reliable and trustworthy in all that He promises to us and does for us. Therefore His veracity and dependability in offering us a way through Jesus Christ to escape the evil of death and embrace the good of eternal life are beyond reproach. So even though we are sinful and by nature objects of His wrath, in His faithfulness and truth God has nevertheless found a way to make *peace* between Himself and us and to remove the enmity between Himself and us, caused by our sins, without corrupting His character, namely, by reconciling us to Himself through the death of His Son, Jesus Christ.

4. God is **Sovereign** (Job 25:2; Ps.93:1-2; Is.40:21-23; 45:21-24; 46:10b-11; 64:8; Jer.10:10; 18:5-10; Dan.3:34-36; 7:13-14; Matt.28:18; Rom.9:20-21; 1Cor.15:24-28; Eph.1:20-21; Phil.2:9-10; 1Tim.6:15; Rev.4:11):

But the Lord shall be seated as king forever: He sets up
His throne for judgment, to judge the world in

righteousness, to render justice to its peoples.
Psalm 9:7-8

Sovereignty comes from God's perfect character. No one else has a legitimate right to rule over the universe. He is the absolute sovereign within His own creation, and therefore the one Person to whom all honor is due. Sovereignty thus speaks to God's *moral authority* and *right* to order the universe however He chooses. From the standpoint of His *transcendence* of the moral universe, He is sovereign by virtue of His goodness, holiness and truth (essential qualities independent of His creation). From the standpoint of His *supremacy within* the moral universe, He is sovereign by virtue of His love, righteousness and life (qualities applying to His creation which correspond to goodness, holiness and truth). Only God is qualified to be the ultimate judge of the morally accountable creatures He has created, and thus to hold them responsible for their actions.⁽⁴⁾ As de facto ruler of the universe (through His perfect nature) and de jure ruler of the universe (through His perfect character), God possesses the sovereign authority

1) to demonstrate *love* to His sinful creatures out of His own *goodness* – not ignoring their sins, as evil suggests He should, but *paying* for them Himself by the death on the cross of His Son, Jesus Christ, in their place (redemption). We call the result of this act of His sovereignty **grace** (Hebrew *chen*: חן; Greek *charis*: χάρις).

2) to administer *justice* to His sinful creatures out of His *holiness* – not abandoning them to their sins, as evil suggests He must, but *forgiving* them Himself on the basis of the death on the cross of His Son, Jesus Christ, in their place (justification). We call the result of this act of His sovereignty **mercy** (Hebrew *chesed*: חסד; Greek *eleos*: ἔλεος).

3) to give *life* to His sinful creatures out of His *truth and faithfulness* – not allowing them to die in their sins, as evil suggests He will, but *reconciling* them to Himself through the death on the cross of His Son, Jesus Christ, in their place (reconciliation). We call the result of this act of His sovereignty **peace** (Hebrew *shalom*: שלום; Greek *eirene*: εἰρήνη).

5. God is **Love** (Deut.10:14-15; Is.63:9; Jer.31:3; Jn.3:16; 15:13; Rom.5:6-8; 8:38-39; Eph.2:5-9; 3:19; Tit.3:4-7; 1Jn.3:16; 4:10; 4:16-19).

Whoever does not have love, does not know God, for God **is** love.

1st John 4:8

Having love for His creatures, is a natural consequence of God's goodness. Out of the intrinsic goodness of His character, God loves us with a perfect love, desiring to help us in our sinful state. However, He does not overlook His holiness and justice in the process and forgive our sin without consequence (as evil suggests He should). Therefore God had to find a way to *reach out to us in love* without compromising His character, and did so did through the gift and sacrifice of His only Son on our behalf. Grace is the biblical name for God's policy of lovingly redeeming us from our sins through Jesus Christ. We accept and receive God's gracious offer of love and redemption by accepting and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our savior.

6. God is **Just** (Deut.32:4; Ps.7:9; 11:7; 33:5; 45:7; 89:14; 111:7-8; 119:142; 145:7b; Is.30:18; 42:1-4; 61:8; Jn.7:18 [not NIV]; Rom.3:4, 21-24; 8:1-4; 11:22; 2Cor.5:21; 1Pet.2:23-24; Rev.16:5).

Demanding justice for His creatures is a natural consequence of God's holiness. Out of the intrinsic holiness of His character, God must deal with us in perfect justice, righteously condemning us in our sinful state. However, He does not overlook His goodness and love in the process and abandon us to our sins (as evil suggests He will). For God found a way to *treat us as righteous* without compromising His character, and did so through the gift and sacrifice of His only Son on our behalf. *Mercy* is the biblical name for God's policy of justly forgiving us on the basis of the death of Jesus Christ. We accept and receive God's merciful offer of justification by accepting and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our savior.

7. God is **Life** (Deut.30:20b; 1Sam.2:6; Job 10:12; 33:4; Ps.16:8-11; 36:9; Jer.10:10; Jn.1:4; 3:16; 5:26; 6:57; 11:25; 17:3; Act.3:15; 1Thes.1:9; 1Jn.1:1-2; 5:20b; Rev.1:18)

I am the way: the truth and the life.

John 14:6

Saving the lives of His creatures, is a natural consequence of God's truth and faithfulness. Out of the intrinsic veracity and trustworthiness of His character, God honors His gracious and merciful promise to restore us to Himself and thereby to eternal life, delivering us from the condemnation of death accruing to us in our sinful state. In doing so, however, He has not failed to resolve the competing demands of His goodness and love on the one hand, with those of His holiness and justice on the other (as evil suggests He must). For God has found a way in accordance with His character to *eliminate the wall of sin and consequent wrath which separates us from Him*, and has done so through the gift and sacrifice of His only Son on our behalf (He died that we might have life). *Peace* is the biblical name for God's life-giving policy of reconciling us to Himself on the basis of the work of Jesus Christ.

We accept and receive God's offer of life, peace and reconciliation by accepting and receiving the biblical plan of salvation through repentance, water baptism in the name of Jesus and the infilling of the Holy Ghost.

The Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God

a) the Father is God (Matt.6:9; 1Cor.8:6; Eph.3:14-15):

b) the Son is God (Jn.5:18; 10:30&33; Rom.9:5; 1Cor.8:6; Col.2:9; Heb.1:3):

c) the Holy Spirit is God (Gen.1:2; Ps.139:7; Acts 5:3-4; 1Cor.12:11)

Theology: the Study of God

by Dr. Robert D. Luginbill

God has manifested the fullness of His love for man through Jesus Christ—the express image of God. Jesus became the sacrifice for man through His death on the cross, man now again has access to a full relationship and fellowship with God.

Phillipians Chapter 2:9-11

⁹Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

¹⁰That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

¹¹And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all unrighteousness.

Course Examination