

# GOD'S CHARACTER

## SESSION 2



SMALL GROUP SERIES

# FOUNDATIONS

THE SALVATION ARMY - USA EAST

**"SOMETIMES, WHEN I HEAR PEOPLE SPEAK ABOUT GOD, I FEEL LIKE AN ATHEIST. THE GOD THEY SPEAK OF I DON'T BELIEVE IN: A GOD WHO LOVES CHRISTIANS BUT HATES MUSLIMS; OR A GOD WHO POURS LUXURIES ON THE RICH BUT CONSIGNS THE POOR TO POVERTY; OR A GOD WHO CARES ABOUT HUMAN SOULS BUT DOESN'T CARE ABOUT COUNSERVING AND PROTECTING OUR BEAUTIFUL, FRAGILE PLANET. SO IF YOU ASK ME, "IS GOD REAL?" I FIRST HAVE TO ASK, "WHICH GOD ARE WE TALKING ABOUT? AND WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY GOD? " ~ BRIAN MCLAREN**

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*A worldview is simply the way we think the world works and how we fit into it. Worldviews will inevitably be shaped either by the media or by the Bible. Worldviews have consequences, and false worldviews can be disastrous. In this session you will spend some time examining your view of God and what the Bible says about God's character. As you spend time discussing these topics, allow yourself to challenge existing views of God, discuss with your group how they view God, and test it against what the Bible has to say on the subject.*

## Opening Questions

- How do you see God? What are the character traits you think of?
- Do you relate most to God the Father, Jesus the Son, or the Holy Spirit?



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## Watch the DVD

Please watch the video about who God is and take time to fill in the blanks and discuss the broad events in His story.

## Who is God?

It is helpful when we are talking to new Christians about God to provide biblical evidence for what we share with them. In your group, read each scripture and match it with the concept that is describing God on the right.

Genesis 1:1	All knowing (Omniscient)
Psalms 90:2	Almighty (Omnipotent)
James 1:17	Creator
Genesis 1:2-3	Eternal
Isaiah 45:5	God alone
Genesis 3:8-9	Governor
John 4:21-24	Holy
Jeremiah 23:23	Love
Hebrews 4:13	Omnipresent
Matthew 19:26	Personal
1 Peter 1:16	Preserver
1 John 4:8	Self-existent
Isaiah 40:25-26	Spirit
Genesis 2	Unchanging
Matthew 4:10	Worthy of Worship

Isaiah 6:1-8

<sup>1</sup> In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. <sup>3</sup> And they were calling to one another:

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty;  
the whole earth is full of his glory.”

<sup>4</sup> At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

<sup>5</sup> “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.”

<sup>6</sup> Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar.

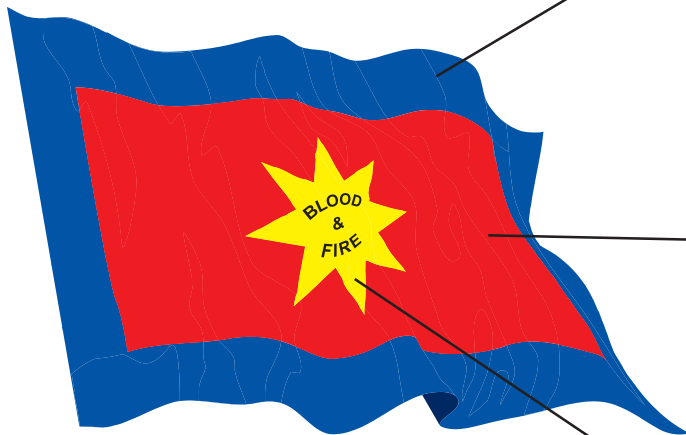
<sup>7</sup> With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.” <sup>8</sup> Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

How did you identify with Isaiah in this passage?

Is God different to you now? When you pray, do you pray to God the Father, or to Jesus' name, or the Spirit?

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## The Trinity



### Blue - Holiness, a Holy People After Our Holy God

Numbers 15:37-40

<sup>37</sup> The Lord said to Moses, <sup>38</sup> "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'Throughout the generations to come you are to make tassels on the corners of your garments, with a blue cord on each tassel. <sup>39</sup> You will have these tassels to look at and so you will remember all the commands of the Lord, that you may obey them and not prostitute yourselves by chasing after the lusts of your own hearts and eyes. <sup>40</sup> Then you will remember to obey all my commands and will be consecrated to your God.'

### Red - Blood of Jesus

Hebrews 9:22, 26

<sup>22</sup> In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. [...] <sup>26</sup> Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.

### Yellow - Holy Spirit

Acts 1:8

<sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

## Doctrine #3: Three Persons in the Godhead

We believe that there are three persons in the Godhead- the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, undivided in essence and co-equal in power and glory.

## Activity

Christianity states that it is Monotheistic (only ONE God).

How can we illustrate an understanding of the Trinity (3 in ONE)?

### **Candle**

- \* Flame
- \* Light
- \* Heat

### **Man**

- \* Husband
- \* Father
- \* Child

### **Egg**

- \* Shell
- \* White
- \* Yoke

### **H<sub>2</sub>O**

- \* Water
- \* Ice
- \* Steam

Briefly share with your group your understanding of the Trinity and a possible means of explanation to someone who claims the Trinity is proof that Christianity is polytheistic (having many Gods). Consider what we've just discussed and add any other illustrations you may have heard.

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None of these are \_\_\_\_\_ but they are simply examples for explaining our triune God.

## A Promise Made

Jeremiah 31:33-34

<sup>33</sup>“This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord.

“I will put my law in their minds and I will write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

<sup>34</sup>No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the Lord. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

1. The Old Testament provided the backdrop for the incarnational revelation to come...Jesus. He is Immanuel meaning \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. Jesus is both human and divine. He is O\_\_\_\_\_, O\_\_\_\_\_, O\_\_\_\_\_ .

## Purpose of the Incarnation

Romans 8:34b

<sup>34</sup>Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Using scripture, let's discover why Jesus came.

John 14:9

Reveals God the Father

2 Corinthians 5:19

Brings salvation

Hebrews 2:11

Shows us how to live

Matthew 28:16-20, Luke 24:50-53

Focus of worship and praise

Central Question: Who do you say Jesus is?

Philippians 2:6-11 (NIV, 2004)

<sup>6</sup>Christ Jesus, who being in the very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, <sup>7</sup>but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup>And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death -- even death on a cross! <sup>9</sup>Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

**If Jesus is the Lord of our life, then we are committed to die to ourselves each and every day.**

**To take up our cross saying, “not my will, but yours’ Father, be done.” Will we live and minister for Christ out of love and gratitude, rather than a mere duty?**

## Group Discussion

Consider Thomas in John 20:28 when he called Jesus 'My Lord and my God.'

What do you think Thomas has discovered about Jesus to provoke this exclamation?

In what way is Thomas' declaration significant to you?

## The Holy Spirit

Is the Spirit an "It" or a "He?"

Hebrew word for Spirit is *Ruach* meaning "breath and wind." This word is a feminine article.

Greek word for Spirit is *Nooma* and is gender neutral... "it"

The Holy Spirit represents something that is not limited by \_\_\_\_\_.

John 16:13

Tells us the role of the Holy Spirit

John 14:26

Identifies him as the counselor

Galatians 5:22-23

Discusses the Fruit of the Spirit

Romans 15:17-19

Tells us that the Holy Spirit gives us power.

Romans 12 & 1 Corinthians 12

Highlights the gifts we receive through the Spirit

Acts 15:28

Leads us into the future

John 14:17

Leads us into all truth; inspiration to write God's Word that still speaks to us today

## Closing Activity: Doxology

2 Corinthians 13:14

<sup>14</sup> May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

1. What is Paul saying about each person in the Godhead?
2. Why is this verse important for our image of God as the Father, Son, and Spirit?
3. How does this doxology bless you?