

Introduction

This correspondence course is designed to help you understand what God has revealed to us in his Word, the Bible. It is important, therefore, to realise that it is a spiritual exercise that you are engaged in, and we pray it will draw you closer to the Lord. In order to benefit most from it, here are a number of suggestions that will help.

1. The most obvious item you will need is a copy of the Bible. Throughout the course you will be directed to many Bible passages and so you will need to read these for yourself. These will be identified by telling you the name of the book of the Bible, and that will be followed by the chapter and verse. For example, Matthew 23:12 – ‘Matthew’ is the Bible book, the first number is chapter 23, and the verse in that chapter is verse 12.
2. Begin with prayer by asking God to guide you. The Bible is the book he has given us, and so there is no one better to go to for help in understanding it. Ask God to teach you the meaning of each Bible passage. Ask God to draw you closer to him as you study. Then ask God to help you apply the lessons you will learn to your own life.
3. Allow yourself plenty of time so that you can think about each question. Some of the questions will require you to consider carefully before answering them. It is important not to rush, because there is

always the danger that you will miss something important. Remember that all time spent studying the Bible will bring you great benefits, so it is well worthwhile to have an adequate amount of time. There is no time limit on when you are to complete the course so there is no pressure to rush through it. You may discover that what you will learn will challenge you to think and pray as God speaks to you through the Bible. Then pause and do just that before going on with the rest of the questions.

4. Try to be somewhere quiet so that you will not be distracted by interruptions. You may have a quiet room in your home, or may know somewhere outside. This is not always possible, so if you cannot find anywhere quiet ask God to help so that the noises around you do not hinder your concentration.
5. If there is a question you do not fully understand, make a note of it and tell us when you return your workbook.
6. When you have completed the questions, return the workbook to the address you will see printed at the end of the course. It will then be marked and returned to you. If you want to add more than the space in the workbook allows for, then put this on a separate sheet of paper, noting the question and page number it refers to, and return it with the rest of the course.
7. When your work is returned, prayerfully go over the comments that will be made by the marker.

8. If the course is in more than one part, the next section will be sent to you when your work is returned to you.
9. A certificate will be awarded recording the work done for those who complete each full course.

The course is designed for your own personal use, instead of a group of people. The reason for this is that it will help you to develop your own spiritual life and understanding. It also allows an assessment to be made directly related to you when you return the course for marking, and we trust you will find this a further help to your own spiritual development.

Through the course other questions may arise in your mind, which are not covered in the study. Write these down and send them to us and we will be very happy to answer them for you.

The Character Of God Part 1.

The purpose of this course is to help you understand something of the greatness and glory of God. It is in three parts, and this is the first. Part two will be sent to you when you return this one for marking. Carefully look at each of the Bible references with each question to discover the answers.

1) Introduction.

1. What two things are necessary for an accurate understanding about God? (Hebrews 11:6)
We must believe:
 - 1.
 - 2.
2. Why do we need to study the Bible, or 'Scripture' as it is also called, in order to discover what God is like? (2 Timothy 3:16)
3. Whom did Jesus say would help his disciples to remember all that he had taught them so that they could write it down for us in the Bible? (John 14:26)

4. The Bible teaches us in Genesis 1:26-27 that man is made in the image of God. Does that mean that God has a body ('Yes' or 'No')? Give the biblical reason for your answer. (John 4:24)

2) God Is Self-sufficient.

Jesus taught that God does not depend on anything outside of himself for his existence. We need food to eat, water to drink, air to breath, and so much more for our existence.

1. Why is God different from us? (John 5:26; Acts 17:25)
2. The special name God used for himself in Exodus 3:14 teaches us God is self-sufficient. What is this special name?
3. Who is dependent on God for everything? (Job 12:10; Acts 17:28)
4. Since God is totally self-sufficient, how does this affect his plans and purposes? (Psalm 115:3)
5. Is anyone able to defeat or frustrate God's purposes? Give your reasons in your own words after looking at

these Bible verses: Psalm 33:11; Isaiah 46:10; Daniel 4:35.

6. How long has God been in existence? (Psalm 90:2)
7. Will God ever wear out or perish ('Yes' or 'No')? Give the biblical reason for your answer from Psalm 102:25-27.
8. If God is so different from us, in your own words explain how you think we should respond to him.

3) God Is Unchangeable.

God is always the same, and will remain the same for ever. His Being does not alter. His plans and purposes do not change. His promises do not fail.

1. What do Malachi 3:6 and James 1:17 teach us about God's variableness?
2. Think of changes that happen to us which do not happen to God. Give four examples.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____

c.

d.

-
-
3. What unchanging aspect of God’s character is indicated in Numbers 23:19 and 1 Samuel 15:29?
 4. Since God is unchangeable, this will affect the working out of his plans. Consider these Bible passages and explain in your own words what this effect on God’s plans is: Psalm 33:10-11; Isaiah 14:24; Isaiah 46:9-10.
 5. What does God’s unchangeableness teach us about the promises he has made in the Bible? (Psalm 89:34; Hebrews 10:23; Hebrews 11:11)
 6. The passing of time has a remarkable effect on us as we age. What does Psalm 102:25-27 teach about the effect the passing of time has on God?

The fact that God is unchanging is a source of great comfort to those who believe in him, because in our rapidly changing and unstable world, he does not alter.

7. How is this brought out in Psalm 100:5 and Jeremiah 31:3?
8. What will never be taken from those who trust in God according to Isaiah 54:10?
9. Because God does not change, Malachi teaches us that this brings a great blessing to every believer. What is that great blessing? (Malachi 3:6) (see also John 10:28-29)
10. It would be a terrible thing if God did change; we could never trust him because he might change his promises. Thankfully that will never happen. Try to think of four benefits that Christian believers gain from God’s unchanging nature. Write these in your own words.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____

There is a very solemn side to God’s unchangeableness. It means that he does not change in his attitude towards sin. God hates sin and all wrongdoing, and must punish it.

11. What does 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10 teach us God will do to those who do not turn from their sinful ways and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for forgiveness?
12. Because God is unchanging he will always be merciful. According to Isaiah 55:7, what does everyone need to do to benefit from God's mercy so as to avoid his punishment?

4) God Is Infinite.

This means that God is not limited as we are, and there are three main areas where this is true.

a. God is perfect.

Because God is infinite he does not have to develop and grow and increase as we do. Everything about him is perfect. He is perfect in holiness, love, grace, power, wisdom, and indeed everything else about God is perfect.

1. What does Psalm 145:3 teach us about God that we cannot measure?
2. In Job 11:7-9 how did Job's friend Zophar show us God is perfect? Write out these verses.

b. God is eternal.

When the Bible teaches us that God is eternal it means that God had no beginning and will have no end.

3. How is this aspect of God's character described in Revelation 1:8?
4. Because Jesus is God, he also taught us he is eternal. How did he describe this in John 8:58?
5. What comfort can believers gain from the fact that God is everlasting? (Psalm 90:1-2)
6. The fact that God is eternal teaches us something about his knowledge of future events. Read Isaiah 46:10 and write down what that is.
7. What kind of life does the eternal God give to those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? (John 3:16)
8. What does it mean to have this special kind of life? (John 17:3)
9. Who will believers be with forever? (1 Thessalonians 4:17)

10. Where will believers live forever? (2 Peter 3:13)
11. The Bible teaches us the solemn fact that Eternal God will punish those who have refused to turn to him in repentance and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. How long will that punishment last? (2 Thessalonians 1:9)
12. When are those who have never trusted in Christ for salvation urged to seek the Lord according to 2 Corinthians 6:2? (See also Isaiah 55:6-7)

c. God is everywhere.

Because we are limited we cannot be in more than one place at a time, but God is not limited like that at all. Some people think that God is confined to special places or buildings like temples or churches, and this is quite wrong because God is immense and is in every place.

13. What did Solomon say about God's presence when he had completed building the temple in Jerusalem? (1 Kings 8:27)
14. What did Paul say about this same truth in Acts 17:24?

15. Because God is everywhere this means he is exalted far above us and yet also very near to us. How did God express this in Isaiah 66:1-2?

Because God is everywhere this means we can never run away and hide from him. He sees us wherever we are and whatever we may be doing.

16. In the days of Jeremiah there were some false prophets, wicked men who told the people lies, and they thought no one realised what they were doing. What did God have to say to these foolish men in Jeremiah 23:23-24?
17. The Old Testament prophet Jonah tried to run away from God. How did God show Jonah that is impossible to do, because he is everywhere? Read Jonah chapters 1 and 2, then describe what happened in your own words.
18. How did David express this wonderful truth that God is everywhere in Psalm 139:7-10?

The fact that God is everywhere has been a great comfort to the people of God down the centuries.

19. How did Moses encourage Joshua with this truth when he had to take over the leadership of the people of Israel? (Deuteronomy 31:6)

20. How did Jesus encourage his disciples with this same truth when he had given them the important task of telling the world about him? Were they going to be alone? Answer 'Yes' or 'No', and give the reason for your answer after reading Matthew 28:18-20.

God wants every believer to enjoy the comfort and encouragement of knowing he is with them wherever they may go.

21. How did David speak about this in Psalm 23:4 and Psalm 118:6-7?

22. How is this a comfort to believers in trial? (Isaiah 41:10 and Isaiah 43:1-2)

23. Because God is everywhere then he is always able to hear our prayers. Where did Paul and Silas sing and pray to God in Acts 16:23-25?

24. Because God is with his people everywhere, what is the list of things that Paul tells us can never separate the believer from the love of Christ in Romans 8:35-39?

The precious lesson from these verses is that although we may be cut off from family and those we love, the Christian believer can never be cut off from God, whatever men may try to do to us. Not even death can take us away from God's presence. In fact it will bring us nearer!

25. God's presence also has a solemn side to it. He sees and knows everything we do, the good and the bad. What did God see in the days of Noah and how did he respond to it in Genesis 6:5-7?

26. We have some awesome examples of God dealing with sinful people recorded in the Bible itself. How did God deal with:

a. Pharaoh in Exodus 14, and

b. Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5?

27. How will God deal with those who refuse to repent of their sins and believe in Jesus? (Philippians 3:18-19; 2 Peter 3:7)

28. What did David dread happening in Psalm 51:11, and why do you think he felt like that?

29. If God was not present everywhere why would the universe fall apart? (Acts 17:28; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3)

It is important for us to remember that although God is present everywhere, he is distinct from all he has made.

5) God Is One.

1. There is a wonderful unity or simplicity about God. How is this described in Deuteronomy 6:4?
2. What response should we make to this fact as described in Deuteronomy 6:5?

We must now consider what the Bible means when it says God is *'one'*.

a. God is not made up of parts.

Unlike us, God cannot be divided up into parts. We could lose a leg in an accident but we would still remain 'us'. This cannot happen with God. We cannot remove a single one of his characteristics or attributes because if we did he would cease to be God. So the Bible does not teach us that a part of God is holy and another part is love. It teaches us that all of God is holy, and all of God is love, etc. So we must say that his love is holy, and his wisdom is holy, and his power is holy, and so we could go on. The Bible does this by telling us 'God is...' and then describes an aspect of his character.

3. Complete the following two examples:

1 John 1:5: "*God is*

1 John 4:16: "*God is*

4. The character of God is particularly displayed in his works. The supreme example of these is the cross of Calvary and the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's own dear Son. Take time to think about that and see how many different aspects of God's character you can discern are displayed through the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. Perhaps the most obvious is the love of God, because God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son to be the Saviour of sinners. Give six other examples.

b. God is the only God.

5. The Bible takes great care to tell us that God is the only God, and that no one else is God. How did Solomon express this in 1 Kings 8:59-60?
6. What did God himself say in Isaiah 46:9?
7. What did Paul write about this? (1 Corinthians 8:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:9)
8. Since the Lord is the only God, what does this teach us about idols? Are they real gods or not? Give your reasons.
9. How does Exodus 20:2-3 help us to see that it is sinful and wrong to worship idols?
10. How should we respond to the only true and living God?

6) God Is Personal.

The Bible teaches us that God is a real person and not an 'it' like some vague power. He is someone who is alive and real, and with whom we can have a personal

relationship. He loves, thinks, cares, speaks, can be angry, can be grieved, can be pleased, and desires our love and worship. Indeed, the Bible tells us God delights to have a relationship with us. And we cannot know true lasting peace and joy in our lives until we do know him in this personal way.

1. Because God is personal he has made himself known to us in his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. How did Jesus describe this in John 14:9 and what precious name did he give to God in that verse?

a. God is the Father of his people.

This is a very rich truth that is full of consolation and instruction.

2. Write down four of the ways an earthly father relates to his own children.
3. How did Jesus say his disciples were to address God when we pray to him in Matthew 6:9?
4. Write out Psalm 68:5 and then explain what it means in your own words.

5. What do these verses teach us about the Fatherhood of God?
 Psalm 89:26:
 John 16:27:
 Psalm 103:13:
6. What does John 10:27-29 teach us about God our Father and the Christian believer's security?
7. Because God is our Father in heaven who cares for us, what privilege does this bring to the believer as described by Peter in 1 Peter 5:7?
8. What will our Father God do if we draw near to him? (James 4:8)
9. Will God the Father ever leave the believer on his own? See Hebrews 13:5 and Psalm 119:151.

b. An important question.

10. How can we become one of God's children and come under his loving Fatherly care? (Ephesians 1:4-6 especially verse 5)

See also Galatians 4:4-6 and Romans 8:15-16.

c. Privileges to enjoy.

Because God is personal he talks with his people. He did this to Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden (Genesis 2:16 & 3:8-9). He talked with Noah (Genesis 6:13ff). He spoke with Moses (Exodus 3:4). And there are many other examples in the Bible.

11. How does 2 Timothy 3:16-17 tell us God speaks to his people today?
12. Because God is our Father, he not only speaks to us, but we can speak to him in prayer. What is the only way John 14:6 tells us anyone can come to God?

d. The right response from us.

13. In your own words describe how you think we should respond to God our Father who loves and cares so much for us.

7) God Is Knowledgeable.

The Bible teaches us that God's knowledge includes absolutely everything. He knows the past, the present and the future all at once. He knows things done openly and things done in secret. He knows everything actual and possible. Nothing has been, is, or ever will be outside of his full understanding.

1. What does 1 Samuel 2:3 say about God's knowledge?

a. God's knowledge is perfect.

2. God's knowledge or understanding is huge. How does Job 37:16 and Psalm 147:5 describe it?

Job 37:16

Psalm 147:5

3. How does Isaiah 55:8-9 show us God's knowledge is greater than anything we can conceive?

4. How has Paul described the greatness of God's knowledge in Romans 11:33-36?

5. If God's knowledge is perfect, does he still have to learn things as we do? Answer 'Yes' or 'No' and give your reasons. Isaiah 46:10 and Isaiah 40:13-14 will help you answer correctly.

6. As God's knowledge is perfect is it possible to hide anything from him? (Hebrews 4:13)

7. What does God know about our actions? (Psalm 139:1-3)

8. What does God know about our thoughts? (Psalm 139:2 and Ezekiel 11:5)

9. What does God know about our words, and remember, this even includes a whisper? (Psalm 139:4)

10. Why is it foolish for anyone to think if they do things in the dark God will not know about it? (Psalm 139:11-12)

11. How much did God know about the length of our lives, even before we were born? (Psalm 139:16b)

12. What do Psalm 139:13-16a and Jeremiah 1:5 teach us about God's knowledge of us before we were born?

Because God's knowledge is perfect he not only knows all of the past, but also all of the future.

13. Make a list of the things God told his people he knew would happen to the Lord Jesus Christ long before he came to earth. Confine your search to these Bible passages: Micah 5:2; Isaiah 53; Psalm 22.

b. Important lessons to appreciate.

The fact that God knows absolutely everything is a great comfort for believers, especially when they go through trial and difficulty. God knows all about it.

14. How does this help us to pray to God about our difficulties? Answer in your own words, and also look at Job 23:10 which he spoke while going through terrible trials.

15. How does God's perfect knowledge help us not to be over anxious? (Matthew 10:29-31)

16. What does God delight to do for those who trust him? (See the first part of 2 Chronicles 16:9.)

17. How does God's perfect knowledge bring assurance to the Christian believer about his salvation? (2 Timothy 2:19 and John 21:17)

God's perfect knowledge brings a warning to those who think they can sin and get away with it.

18. What does Proverbs 15:3 teach us about the uselessness of trying to hide our sinful behaviour from God?

19. Carefully read Acts 5:1-11. In your own words describe what Ananias and Sapphira tried to conceal from God, and what happened to show how mistaken they had been.

20. How should God's perfect knowledge challenge and prepare us to face the day of judgement? Read Hebrews 4:13, Matthew 12:36-37 and 2 Corinthians 5:10 to guide you with your answer.

21. There are a number of people in the Bible who tried to hide things from God. Using your own words, explain what the following list of people did and how they failed in their attempt to hide it from God. Write on a separate sheet of paper if there is not enough room below.

Cain in Genesis 4:1-12

Sarah in Genesis 18:12-15

David in 2 Samuel chapters 11 and 12

22. How does Numbers 32:23 teach us that none of our wrongdoing will go unnoticed by God?
23. The great challenge that God's perfect knowledge brings to all of us is this: we all do wrong, and he knows the detail of each of our lives. This puts us in great danger of God's judgement and in great need of God's mercy. What does Psalm 130:3-4 tell us about this?
24. God's forgiveness is something each of us needs. Why do we need to ask the Lord Jesus Christ to bring us God's forgiveness? (Luke 24:46-47; Acts 10:43; Ephesians 1:7)

8) God Is Wise.

When the Bible teaches us that God is wise, it means that God always chooses the very best end or goal, and the very best means of achieving it. This is true of God all of the time. Unlike us, he is never unwise or foolish. God will never do anything that would dishonour himself.

1. Write out in full the following Bible verses that tell us about the wisdom of God:

Romans 16:27:

Job 9:4:

Job 12:13:

2. How does Proverbs 3:19 link God's wisdom with his creation of the universe?

God's wisdom is seen in the way he has promised to bring blessing to all Christian believers through everything that happens to them, whether they face difficult and painful experiences or joyful and happy times.

3. How is this described in Romans 8:28?

God's wisdom is seen supremely in his plan of salvation. This is seen in the way God overruled the wickedness of those who murdered the Lord Jesus Christ. Through his death Jesus obtained the salvation of all who will believe in him.

4. How does Peter describe this in Acts 2:23-24?
5. The crucifixion of Jesus looks like foolishness to so many, while being very precious to those who follow him. 1 Corinthians 1:18-19 tells us what will happen to

those who consider it foolish, as well as what it means for those who believe. Copy what Paul wrote in those verses.

6. God knew that if our salvation could be achieved by our efforts, then we would become proud and boast about what we had done instead of giving God the glory for it. To avoid that happening, what means has God in his wisdom chosen to bring salvation to sinful people? It is described in Ephesians 2:8-9.
7. After writing about God's great plan of salvation, how did Paul praise and magnify God in Romans 11:33-36, and should we do the same?
8. God's wisdom has always been a source of comfort to believers, especially when going through trials that are difficult to understand. One of the most outstanding examples of this is Job in the Old Testament. His children were killed, his donkeys were stolen, his sheep burned and his camels raided. He was left with nothing. Yet he was able to declare in Job 1:21, "*The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.*" Then, to add to all this, his health failed and he was afflicted with painful sores. These were very perplexing circumstances that Job did not fully understand at all, but he knew that even in all of this the Lord God was working out his wise and perfect

purposes. This is seen in his tremendous statement of faith in Job 23:10. What did Job say?

9. We stand in considerable need of wisdom ourselves. What does James say we should do to obtain wisdom from God? (James 1:5)

While we are to ask God for this wisdom, the Bible also tells us we are responsible for cultivating wisdom in our own lives.

10. What does Proverbs 9:10 tell us we need to do to accomplish this?
11. To obtain spiritual wisdom requires us to pray to God for it, and also for us to be willing to learn from him. Moses was very much aware of this and he asked God to help him to have the right priorities throughout the whole of his life. How did he express this in Psalm 90:12?
12. One of the great stumbling blocks in man that prevents our being truly wise and being willing to learn from God is human pride. What does Proverbs 11:2 have to teach us about this? First write the verse out, then explain in your own words what it means.

13. The proud person thinks he has no need of God or his wisdom. What does Paul tell us we need to remember in Romans 14:12, which, if we do, should keep us from being proud?
14. True wisdom produces godliness in the believer. Write out James' lovely description of this in James 3:13-18.
15. The opposite of wisdom is folly. How is an unwise person described in Psalm 14:1?
16. In Luke 12:13-21 we are told by Jesus about a rich fool. You will notice he had no time for God in his life and never once thanked God for the good things he had, neither did he want to share any of them with his poor neighbours. He only thought of himself. What happened to this foolish man's plans that he failed to consider when he thought about the future?
17. When sinners realise their sinful folly and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ for forgiveness, they are then forgiven and they belong to Jesus forever. A phrase the Bible often uses to describe Christian believers is that they are '*in Christ*'. What does 1 Corinthians 1:30 say this brings to us?

Well done! Now that you have completed the first part of this course read over your answers carefully to see if you need to change them in any way. When you have done that, please return it to us for marking at the ***Sound Words*** address over the page, and we will send you the second part. Remember that when you have completed the next two sections of the course successfully you will be awarded with a certificate of achievement.

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**Grace Baptist Mission
12 Abbey Close
Abingdon
OXON
OX14 3JD
UK**

e-mail: radio@gbm.org.uk